LEARNING / I1-4
The Magic Tree
What Adel Tamano has learned

LIFESTYLE / D1
Concert pays tribute to neglected Filipino composer

BUSINESS / B2-4
Feng shui masters see calmer markets

BUSINESS / B2-1
How to get your life back on track when banks, preneed firms fold

ACROSS / A18
Korean foreman dies in Hanjin shipyard accident

Carmona condo units rising for poor families

By Charlie E. Bukas

WITH MANY BUSINESSMEN TAKING A cautious stance amid the gloomy economic outlook, a group of property developers has decided to invest in a project for Filipinos living near or below the poverty line.

"As home builders, we also think about

CONDO UNITS A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, January 26, 2009 ★ 12 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 69 P18 online www.inquirer.net

Lefties also find a hero in Barack

WASHINGTON—Barack Obama's inauguration as the 44th US president was not just a cause of rejoicing for African-Americans. Another minority—left-

LEFTIES A4

RP eyes Obama as savior of OFWs

Owwa chief hopes US favors Pinoys

By Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon
and Jerome Aning

FACED WITH HEAVY JOB losses in export-oriented industries, especially electronics and garments, the Philippines can find hope in labor policies to be set by new US President Barack Obama that may give Filipinos a chance of working in the United States, according to the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa).

"We are hoping that there would be new policies that would help hasten migration, particularly for [professionals in the] health sector, because the Philippines has a bigger chance [of finding] employment in this sector," Owwa Administrator Carmelita Dimzon told reporters in Baguio City on Friday.

Dimzon said the United States, where about two million Filipinos live and work, was still the top destination for nurses and Filipino migrants.

"The United States has a great need for health care because of [its] aging population. [It needs] more nurses and the Philippines has become a good source of manpower," she said.

Manuela Pena, Owwa Cordillera director, noted that while the United States was carrying out belt-tightening measures, she had yet to hear about the displacement of Filipino migrants.

Suffering from a shrinking economy, the United States shed 2.6 million jobs last year, the highest yearly job loss since 1945. One bright spot was the health care sector, which added 372,000 jobs.

EFFECTS DIMMED A21

CHINESE NEW YEAR Miniature figures of an ox, like this one, sell briskly in Baguio City as the Chinese-Filipino community welcomes the Year of the Earth Ox. Many believe that possessing an ox figurine this year would bring good luck amid economic hardships.

World elite go into crisis retreat at Swiss resort

GENEVA—LEADERS FROM RUSSIA and China are the star attractions among a record number of heads of state and government gathering at the Swiss winter resort of Davos this week to discuss how to get the global economy off the skids.

With the capitalist world suffering its worst battering since the Great Depression, the words of two leaders of former communist countries—China's Premier Wen Jiabao and Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin—are expected to dominate Wednesday's start of the elite five-day World Economic Forum.

Putin, Wen, Japan's Prime Minister Taro Aso, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown are all scheduled to lecture scores of government leaders and ministers and hundreds of corporate chiefs on how crushing economies can be saved.

The way has been left open for Russia and China to monopolize the debate as no top policymaker from the administration of US President Barack Obama has agreed to go to Davos. Neither Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner nor Obama's economic adviser Lawrence Summers followed up on initial acceptances.

Obama and his economic team have been busy lobbying US lawmakers for the speedy passage of a $825-billion stimulus

WORLD / A4

Absolutely no Obama-GMA chemistry

By Amando Doronila

IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF HIS administration, US President Barack Obama overturned a slew of George W. Bush's policies in his war on terrorism.

ANALYSIS

Obama signed a stream of executive orders laying down rules on transparency of governance and banning torture in the interrogation of terrorism suspects. These orders mark a pronounced break with the Bush administration on security policy and governance style.

Those directives should provide clues to the Arroyo administration on signals

ABSOLUTELY / A4

DIAL AGAINST DRUGS

Calls, texts swamp DDB hotline

By Jocelyn R. Uy

FOR FOUR DAYS STRAIGHT TWO weeks ago, Joana Desiderio received phone calls from an old man about a drug peddling activity backed by a supposedly big-time personality in Manila.

The person behind the illegal activity was a politician, the informant told Desiderio, an action officer of the newly launched 24-hour Drug Information and Action Line (Dial) Center, which the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) touted as a first in the country.

Another caller, this time a woman, named several possessors who supposedly compelled her to give them money in exchange for settling a drug case she was involved in.

A tipster also warned about a beautiful fugitive plant called Angel's Trumpet" that was gaining popularity in Baguio City among teenagers for its hallucinogenic effects.

"It makes you really high. Is the DDB doing anything about it?" the tipster asked in a text message.

Pena Apayao and Kalinga in provinces in Mindanao, concerned citizens have started making calls and sending text messages to the hotline, providing information vital to the fight against illegal drugs, such as the location of a clandestine laboratory or a new drug peddling modus operandi.

CALLS A20

Mangyan, Aeta folk write own storybooks

By Ma. Corea P. Dopo

WHY DID THEY BECOME poor and oppressed when their ancestors used to live in an Eden-like setting that was rust, verdant, rich and peaceful?

These questions are answered in the storybooks for children written and illustrated by the Mangyan and Aeta peoples themselves.

Poverty and discrimination have long defined their lives. Considered a breed apart, they lived on the edge of society. Whoever wrote the song "Negritos of the mountain, what kind of food do you eat?" for Filipino schoolchildren of

RAINFOREST A21

COVERS of storybooks written and illustrated by Mangyan and Aeta authors and artists.

'Read-Along' tackles bravery, hard work

THEY FOLLOWED THE ADVENTURES of a fish, shared the anxieties of a tadpole, and savored the triumphs of a dyslexic boy.

The Inquirer Read-Along ushered in the Chinese Year of the Ox with stories imparting lessons on hard work, conquering fear and braving new challenges, with TV sports celebrity Dyan Castillejo reading to an audience of around 80 children.

Award-winning Adarna storyteller Dyali Jones also graced the session on Saturday, the second to be held at the Inquirer offices this year.

Castillejo read "The Bravest Fish," a story about a little fish named Stanley who faced his fears just to be with friends. The story was written by Matt Buckingham and published by Scholastic.

"I did not appreciate reading to kids until my son came," Castillejo said, referring to his 6-year old son Matthew.

"I started reading to him while he was in my womb. Now, he would re-

READ-ALONG A22

FIT TO READ Sports celebrity host Dyan Castillejo reads to some 80 children at the Inquirer Read-Along session in Makati City.

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY Eastern sections of Central and Northern Luzon and Visayas mostly cloudy, with cells scattered light rains. Southern Luzon and Mindanao fair; mostly cloudy skies with isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Metro Mindanao	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Puerto Princesa	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Iloilo	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Kalibo	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Catarman	Partly Cloudy	Surigao	Partly Cloudy

Source: PAGASA

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Food agency cuts over 1,000 jobs

Reduction is due to redundancy, not financial crisis, NFA clarifies

By Nyx T. Dichaves

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) SAID over the weekend it would abolish 1,242 redundant positions as part of its rationalization plan.

The announcement is a 25-percent reduction in its current 4,985 workforce.

NFA spokesperson Rex Estoperez said there was no cause for alarm because the rationalization plan had been in the works since 2004 and affected employees have until March 31 to decide on their options.

He said employees in redundant positions would be given other vacant jobs if they are qualified and willing to undergo retraining.

Estoperez said there were 679 vacant positions.

In cases where job skills and positions don't match (for example, for redundant laborers who may not be able to meet standards for a desk position), the NFA has recommended to the Department of Budget and Management that their positions be made "co-terminus" with their stay.

"When they go, their positions will be delisted and we will not get a replacement for that position," he said.

Estoperez said many NFA employees were nearing retirement age and some were considering leaving the government service to start their own businesses or relocate abroad.

Those wanting to avail of early retirement or severance packages (for non-retirables who want to leave), depending on years of service, have until March 24 to apply, he said.

Not due to meltdown

Estoperez said he still would not say how many employees would opt for early retirement.

"I suppose we will know for sure by March," he said.

Estoperez clarified that the rationalization plan was not a reaction to the global financial meltdown but a long-standing plan.

"The NFA has been around since 1972 and since then we have changed, we also need to make internal changes to become leaner and more efficient," he said.

Not all positions that were needed before are necessary now, and as the NFA evolves it may need to create new positions not yet on the existing payroll, he said.

"But of course our leaner staff would be no less capable of managing our mandate. It's no more food inefficiency. The rationalization plan has gone through a long approval process and the government would not have approved it if we would be shortchanged later," Estoperez said.

Executive Order No. 366 or the Government's Rationalization Plan aims to reduce costs and increase the efficiency of government agencies.

Partial eclipse of the sun today

By Alexis Pope

SOMNECIBELS ARE IN FOR A rare treat. The first eclipse of the year will occur today until it is a total solar eclipse of the sun.

According to the website of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), the moon will cast a shadow on the earth that will move northeast starting in the Atlantic Ocean and ending just short of Mindanao.

Seen from the earth, the sun will be partially covered by the moon, unlike in a total eclipse where the surface of the sun is completely blocked by the moon.

Pagasa said the annular eclipse will start at 2:02 p.m. local time when the moon will cast a shadow on the South Atlantic. The shadow will move northeast, ending at the Celebes Sea at 5:04 p.m.

In the final minutes, the shadow will cut across central Borneo and skip the northernmost edge of Celebes before stopping just short of Mindanao at 5:32 p.m.

In Metro Manila, the phenomenon will be observed as a partial eclipse and will start at 4:03 p.m.

In a previous news report, James Kevin Ty, president of the Astronomical League of the Philippines, said ALP members of the ALP will set up telescopes at the Boardwalk at the Luneta to observe and take images of the partial solar eclipse.

"Those in Davao will be a little fortunate as the partial solar eclipse will occur a bit earlier—at 4:47 p.m.—and will see the moon covering 77 percent of the sun's disk. Observers in Manila will be able to see only 62 percent of the sun blocked by the moon," Ty said.

The partial solar eclipse will take just a few minutes so sky watchers are advised to set up their telescopes early.

Ty said that despite the phenomenon happening late in the afternoon, observers must not look at rays at the sun with the naked eye, much more through any optical device (telescopes, binoculars) without the use of special filters.

Pope tells RP bishops to shun 'dirty' money

By Norman Bordadora

POPE BENEDICT XVI'S "TOP LIEUTENANT" on charitable activities has asked Filipino bishops to refrain from accepting donations from questionable sources, according to an article that appeared on the website of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).

CBCP News quoted Cardinal Paul Joseph Cordes as telling the local bishops "to reject" assistance from individuals or groups "with dubious purposes" and warned them of "loopholed help."

Cordes is the president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, the Vatican's coordinating body for charitable activities.

He visited the country last week.

"Stewards of the Divine home. They come... they are friendly so you can take pictures. That's often the case," he said, addressing the CBCP during his visit.

A Trojan horse refers to a person or thing that employs trickery to join a group in order to attack it from within.

The bishops official urged the local bishops and Church-based charitable organizations to avoid accepting help that debases the objective and true meaning of charity.

Cordes said real generosity is giving without expecting anything back.

"This is the true collaboration of million people," he said.

Sought for comment, anticorruption advocate Linggayan Archbishop Oscar Cruz said he took Cordes' remarks "well" as he didn't believe "the end justifies the means."

"Wow is one if I receive money of dubious origins supposedly even for charitable works," Cruz said yesterday in a telephone interview.

Cruz, a staunch critic of the corruption in the government and of illegal gambling, said he himself had a good number of programs that were being funded with donations.

He said he had livelihood, medical and scholarship programs.

"I do not need money from politicians or illegal gambling organizations. A lot of people are willing to give... with clean hands," Cruz said.

He said donations from corrupt sources could lead one "to lose no evil [and] see no evil."

Cordes addressed the bishops as part of the activities related to the CBCP's plenary assembly this month. He arrived Monday last week and left on Saturday.

Hero cops to get medals from GMA at PNP rites

By Jocelyn R. Uy

ROGUE ARMED COMMUNIST rebels looted a police station in Negros Oriental two months ago, PNP Chief Jesus Verzosa disclosed during the 108th anniversary of the Philippine National Police today.

Arguably the most controversial PNP chief in recent years, Verzosa said the rebels made off with 20 high-powered firearms, 10 radios and P100,000 in cash from the police station in Bayawan City on Nov. 26.

Verzosa said the rebels also burned the police station and a police vehicle.

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From page A1

package aimed at lifting the world's largest economy out of a yawning recession.

On Saturday, Obama took to the airwaves and the Internet to build public support for his economic recovery plan by emphasizing its benefits for average Americans—thousands of new schools, lower electricity bills, and health coverage for millions who lose their insurance along with their jobs.

The Obama administration is also working on reforms and measures for the second half of the $700-billion Troubled Asset Relief Program. The new money from the fund will be used to stabilize the the housing market, strengthen US banks and support credit markets to spur lending for autos, homes, small businesses, commercial real estate, college students and municipalities.

Shaping post-crisis world

Davos supremo Klaus Schwab has made "Shaping the Post-Crisis World" the key theme of the 39th annual World Economic Forum. And the summer homes and hotels on Wall Street and other major financial centers will be relieved to a sharp change of tone at this year's meeting.

World Economic Forum organizer Borge Brende told a press briefing in Geneva that it was "unrealistic" to put China and Russia side by side as they had become "key players of the world economy."

"It is a very powerful sign from China, my sense is that they want to engage with the rest of the world including a solution out of the crisis," said Bidoon Mahbubani, dean of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

Premier Wen will lead one of the biggest Chinese delegations ever to the snow-covered Swiss resort, flanked by Trade Minister Chen Deming and Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi. Li Ning was the last Chinese premier to attend the forum in 2002.

Forum organizers said a record 38 Chinese business leaders would also be in Davos.

Russia is also expected to put in a presence this with Putin making the keynote opening speech at the forum while he is joined by Deputy Prime Ministers Igor Shuvalov and Sergei Ivanov, Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov.

Global recession

"Russia's relations with the Europeans have been strained. Russia may be looking for a way to signal to Europe that they are ready to cooperate," said Mahbubani, a former diplomat.

Mahbubani pointed out that "survival" Davos was an ideal arena for Moscow to "send a conciliatory message" on political and energy issues especially as the Russian economy has now been hit by the crisis, with oil only about $40 a barrel—more than a $100 below its peak last year.

China's economic growth has also slowed dramatically as exports were stalled. The mass joblessness and worries that migrant economy unleashed by last fall protests in the final quarter. This pulled the full-year growth figure down to 9 percent, scoring by Chinese standards after a 13-percent growth rate in 2007.

Troubles are also mounting for other major economies represented at the Davos forum.

An increasingly strong yen, for instance, is threatening the export reliant Japanese economy. Bank of Japan said financial concerns had become tighter even with its benchmark rate now to zero, supporting that low rates alone may not be enough to pull the world's second-biggest economy out of recession.

Latest data pointed toward deeper recession in the euro zone. British data confirmed the economy had gone into recession for the first time since 1991 as GDP contracted a larger-than-expected 1.5 percent in the last quarter of 2008.

Adding to the gloom was data showing the United States lost 2.6 million jobs last year, the most in any single year since World War II. Manufacturing is at a 28-year low and even China's economists say unemployment could top 10 percent before the recession ends.

Close to 3.5 American businesses are just risk of foreclosure, and the dollar continues to slide in value. On Friday, for Centennial Bank of Scottsdale, California, became the third US bank to fold this year.

Accountability

IMD business school professor Jean-Pierre Lehmann said business and other captains of industries at the Davos forum may be the first time have to face up to questions on their role in the financial crisis.

"There was always a certain element of evangelism exploitation during previous years' forum. You don't get fundamental debate on the system," Lehman said.

He noted that Davos had been founded on the "dogma of business leadership," which in many circles have been battered by the crisis fallout.

"What I am most curious about is whether there will be acts of contrition. Given that we have all done brilliant leaders ... how come we are all taken by surprise by the downturn?" Lehmann asked. *Reports from AFP Reuters and AP*

WORLD Economic Forum founder and executive chairman Klaus Schwab gestures during a press conference on the upcoming WEF annual meeting, at forum headquarters in Cologny near Geneva. Heavyweights from the worlds of business and politics will gather at the Swiss Alpine resort of Davos from Jan. 28 to Feb. 1. AFP

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No PDEA post but Palparan was briefed

By Christian V. Esguerra

ALTHOUGH HE HASN'T BEEN ASKED TO join the war on drugs, retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan has been briefed on the workings of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency by no less than PDEA chief Dionisio Santiago, himself a retired general.

Santiago said he would make Palparan his deputy for "special concerns" in case the controversial former military officer is appointed to the PDEA by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"We will discuss with him how best we can utilize him at PDEA," Santiago told the reporters yesterday in a phone interview.

Santiago said he gave Palparan an overview of what PDEA does during a briefing last week. Afterward, he said, the retired general "seemed to like" the idea of joining the agency.

Prior to the briefing, Santiago said Presidential Acting Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita had phoned him to tell him to expect a call from Palparan.

Incoming Press Secretary Cerge Remonde, however, said yesterday Palparan's appointment to PDEA or the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) was not set in stone.

"It's not yet sure as to make any resolutions at this point would be speculative," Remonde said in an interview over Radyo ng Bayan.

Mandaluyong Rep. Sally Lorenzo on Saturday opposed Palparan's possible appointment to PDEA, saying it would "only draw criticism and dilute whatever public support the government has in the fight against illegal drugs."

Palparan had been branded a "berdugo" by left-leaning groups that accused him of being behind the alleged abduction, torture and execution of their comrades when he was in the service.

Asked about Palparan's spotty human-rights record, Santiago said he thought the retired general would do well in the fight against illegal drugs.

"You give me people, I'll utilize them and judge them according to how they will perform," Santiago said.

He said DDB Chair Mysene "Tito" Lorenzo III had also expressed interest in getting Palparan on the drugs board representing nongovernment organizations.

Santiago said Palparan's network in the communities would benefit the PDEA. He said Palparan would do "advocacy" work and warn the public about the evils of drug abuse.

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Absolutely no Obama-GMA chemistry

From page A1

Obama is sending out to govern-

ments seeking to improve relations with Washington.

Obama has ordered the closure of the Guantanamo detention ... within a year and the shutdown of remaining Central Intelligence Agency "black site" prisons abroad. He has also barred CIA interrogators from using harsh techniques, such as "water-boarding," already banned by military questioners.

Striking a blow for transparency, he directed a salary freeze for senior White House staff, tightening rules on lobbyists, and establishing what he said was a new standard for a "more responsible, more accountable government."

This directive followed swiftly his inaugural speech, in which he said: "Those of us who manage the public dollars will be held to account to spend wisely, reform the bad habits and do our business in the light of day, because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government."

This could as well have rung a bell with the scandal-ridden Philippine government that has been in bad odor with the US government even during the Bush administration. This could as well be an irritant with the Obama administration.

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Message to GMA

A surrogate message to President Macapagal-Arroyo came through in the Obama inaugural speech, when he said: "To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit, and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history, but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist."

In overturning the Bush anti-intervention policy Obama was more pointed with specifics on methods he wanted stopped. In ordering the closure of the Guantánamo detention center and banning the use of torture by US personnel, Obama aimed at restoring US moral authority and international standing.

Obama said that the United States intended to prosecute the continuing struggle against violence and terrorism "in a manner that is consistent with our values and our ideals."

"I think that the American people understand that we are not, as I said in the inauguration, going to continue with a false choice. America's most valuable asset for the foreseeable and the horizon of our global leadership," he said.

There has been no hint about how the new policies in preserving the war on terrorism would affect the infrequent crowding the sentences of and prisoners of the more than 200 US troops in the Philippine military's campaign against suspected Islamic terrorist groups and separatist rebels in Mindanao.

The Philippine-US security

Lefties also find a hero in Barack Obama

From page A1

...leave one of their own back in the White House.

Obama has joined a disproportionately high number of southpaw US leaders, and the well-documented intuition and creativity of left-handed people may be exactly what a nation in crisis needs right now.

"I'm fully bit used to it," Obama quipped to photographers as he signed his first official documents a day after his historic inauguration as America's first black president last Tuesday. He wasn't referring to the politics.

Left-handers comprise one in 10 of the general US population, according to scientific studies, but they have occupied an outsized place in the annals of politics, sports and the arts.

Before Obama, four of the past five US presidents were lefties...Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan (who was ambidextrous), George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

In fact, the few would have extended advantage the result of last November's election, as Obama's Republican rival, John McCain is also a southpaw.

Aversion is ancient

Examples further back are harder to find, but they may have something to do with society's traditional aversion to lefties.

Until well into the 20th century, schoolchildren in the United States and beyond risked beatings for writing with their left hands.

The aversion is ancient. The English word "sinister" derives from the Latin for left.

"There are reasons to be unsurprised to see lots of southpaw presidents. Lefties are over-represented among those with high verbal abilities," Princeton University professor of neuroscience Sam Wang told Agence France-Presse.

"They have been shown to be more likely to take unusual approaches in problem-solving...in scholarly papers this is sometimes called divergent thinking," he said.

Communication skills

Wang explained that left-handed people tended to process language with both halves of their brain, not just one, which might explain the communication skills of Obama, Clinton and Reagan.

"However, they're not a monolithic group," the scientist said. "Lefties are also overrepresented among the mentally retarded."

Before the 20th century, the only known left-handed president was James Garfield, who assassinated in 1881 after just four months in office.

Obama bin Laden, too

Obama is part of a select club on the global stage, although he may look askance at some of its fellow members.

Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden is another lefty, according to his entry on the FBI's "most wanted terrorists" list.

While left-handers all too often encounter problems in a right-handed world—with scissors, with writing desks and so on—there are advantages for the new president, who may have inherited dexterity on the basketball court.

And nowadays, the online world provides a haven for this particular minority to come together. There is much excited chatter among the 820-plus members of the Facebook group "Left-Handed People for Barack Obama."

Group member Rhianka writes: "I'm so excited that the President is a lefty!!! Left-handed people are strong but thoughtful, encouraging but take charge, things you need as a President!!!"

Wang commented: "Lefties feel joined us, are considered different, and so on. They feel set apart.

"The outsider feeling is a common one among very successful scientists and artists. It's a paradox considering that they end up as leaders." AFP

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Int'l group ends power plant deal

By Amy R. Remo

THE INTERNATIONAL consortium that won the bid for the 600-megawatt Calaca coal-fired power plant in Batangas is terminating its $307-million investment because the government could not fulfill conditions of the sale.

In a statement, the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm) said Transalta Energy Corp. (EEC), backed by the Belgian power firm Tractebel, submitted on Jan. 23 a notice of termination of the Asset Purchase Agreement for the Calaca plant, one of the country's biggest power assets.

EEC said it "observed deterioration in the condition of the Calaca plant" since the bidding on Oct. 16, 2007.

One of the conditions for the turnover of the power plant was that it should be delivered to the winning bidder "as is, where is," or in the same condition it was in on the bidding date.

Evaluate

Pedro said it would evaluate the notice from EEC to determine the government's options under the circumstances, and would also immediately prepare the Calaca plant for rebidding.

Despite the setback, Pedro said it remained committed to and to privatizing all of the government's power-generating assets.

EEC, the former Calaca Holdco Inc., won the bid for the Calaca plant in 2007, edging out First Gen Corp. and AES Corp.

The firm was put up by Suez Tractebel as a special purpose company for the bidding and to operate the Calaca plant. Suez Tractebel is one of the world's top independent power producers with operations in more than 100 countries.

Prior to its sale to EEC, the Calaca plant was put up for bids twice, first in June 2005 and then in April 2006. Both biddings were declared failures because only one bid was made it to the auction.

Artificially low

The sale of the Calaca facility came with a 267-megawatt power supply contract to give the new owner a ready market for the plant's output.

Psalm's late last year said the EEC was also concerned about the country's "artificially low" electricity rates. Government regulators had assured them that energy guidelines would be adjusted.

The pullout of EEC was not unexpected. In a privilege speech during a House committee on energy hearing last December, Bayan Muna Rep. Rodolfo Antonino warned the multibillion-dollar sale might not be consummated because of the plant's deteriorating condition.

"The winning bidder does not want to take over the (plant) and complete its overhaul by 2010 for the reason that the plant has deteriorated during Napocor's watch," Antonino said.

Running poorly

He said Unit 1 of the plant, in particular, had been running poorly three past years, allegedly because of Napocor's decision to switch to 100-percent Semirara coal, when the unit was configured to run on a 60-40 blend of imported and local coal.

This "anomalous" decision, he said, resulted in forgone generation revenues of as high as 96.7 billion for Napocor as well as the deterioration of the Calaca plant's Unit 1. With a report from Abigail L. Ho

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, January 26, 2009
Thursday and Thus, Mishnaya

Gospel: Mk 3:22-30

The teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem said, "He is in the power of Beelzebub; the chief of the demons helps him to do his evil devices."

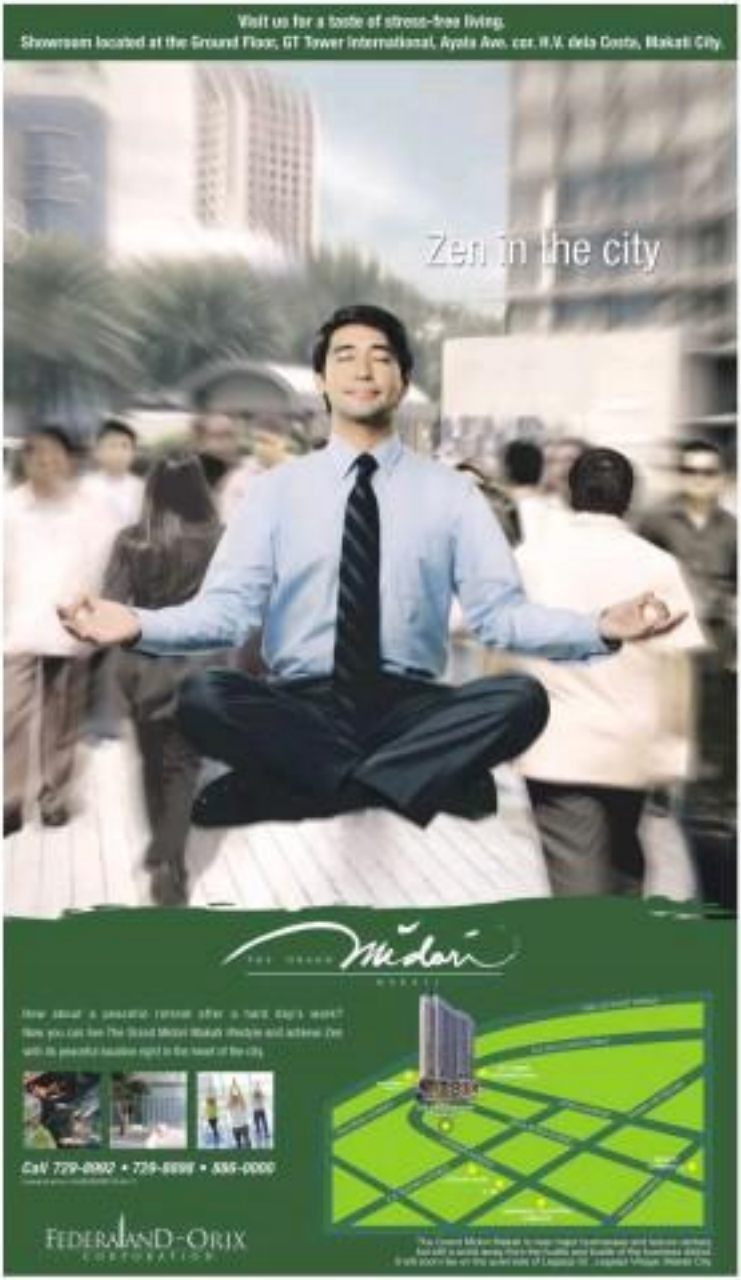
Jesus called them to him and began teaching them by means of stories or parables. "How can Satan drive out Satan? If a nation is divided by civil war, that nation cannot stand. If a family is torn into two groups, that family will not survive. In the same way, if Satan has risen against himself and is divided, he will not stand, he is finished. No one can break into the house of the strong one in order to plunder his goods, unless he first ties up the strong one. Then indeed, he can plunder his house.

"Truly, I say to you, every sin will be forgiven humankind, even words to God, however reverent. But whoever slanders the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven: he commits the guilt of an sin forever." This was their sin when they said, "He has an evil spirit in him."

Commentary

The teachers of the Law publicly accused Jesus of being in league with Satan, explaining his exorcisms that way. When Jesus conducted an exorcism, he never invoked God. Pharisees (even those who let go the authority to pull it off demonstrated work as follows: Satan can't cast out Satan. Because Satan would be defeating himself. The only alternative was that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 30), solely from God. Jesus answers by the power of the Holy Spirit. The teachers of the Law were trying to convince the people that the Holy Spirit was Satan. Thus, they clearly blasphemed against God.

Blasphemy is not an ordinary sin. Blasphemy is a deliberate, public slander against God. In order for someone like me, one has to be in a position of formal authority. So, to those who are worried about the possibility of blaspheming, we say this: the surest sign that you have not committed blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the very fact that you are worried about it, because that shows the (Holy Spirit) is very definitely on good terms with you. May God's peace always be with you!



CITIZEN POWER MOVEMENT

LAKAS NG ISA: LAKAS NG BAYAN

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Sa walang pagbabago at lumalalang kahirapan,
Korapsyon at karahasan sa ating lipunan,
May pag asa pa kayang makaahon ang sambayanan?

Ibalik ang paghahari ng batas, hindi ang bari.
Ibalik ang paghahari ng katwiran, hindi ang bulag na paniniwala.
Ibalik ang marangal na oleksyon, hindi ang dayaan at perahan.
Ibalik ang marangal na pamahalaan at serbisyo sa bayan.

Sumali sa Citizen Power Movement,
Ang bagong pag-asa na matupad ang pangarap
Ng bawat Filipino sa Kapayapaan
Disente at marangal na pamumuhay at
Magandang kinabukasan para sa lahat.

Kaya,
Unahin ang MAGSASAKA at Pagkain sa mesa
Unahin ang PABAHAY para sa MASA,
Unahin ang kapakanan ng VENDOR, hindi ng sidewalk
Unahin ang MANGINGISDA, TRICYCLE DRIVER at EPZA workers,
Unahin ang MASS TRANSPORT SYSTEM,
Isumbong, hulihin at ikulong ang kurakot at mandarambong.

Hindi pa huli ang lahat,
May bukas pa at bagong liwayway,
Kahit na nag isa, meron kang magagawa,
Makilya at kumilos sa pag abot ng ating inang-bayan.
Sumali sa CITIZEN POWER MOVEMENT: Makadios, Makatao, Makakalikasan.

EDNO JOSON

President, Citizen Power Movement

A. As Congressman (14th Congress) – Proposed the following bills: Referendum and Snap Election Bills as the legal and peaceful mechanism to bring closure to the many accusations hurled against the present administration; Bill qualifying hired killing, and salvaging or extrajudicial killing by any public officer, person in authority or agent of a person in authority as a heinous crime; Prohibiting membership in a criminal syndicate; Total gun ban, privatization of rice importation; Voucher System Act; Food Security Act; Anti-Cheating Law; Boxing Ban; and extensively used the Filipino language in legislation.

B.As NFA Administrator – Lowered prices for basic commodities thru the Erap Rolling Stores and Erap Sari Sari Stores; All-out palay, corn and sugar price support and procurement; initiated seedling and fertilizer subsidy to farmers; initiated establishment and procurement of postharvest facilities and equipment; initiated rice allowance for soldiers in combat duty; introduced electronic system of trading in agriculture; initiated talks for ASEAN Food Security System; Raised employee benefits, wages of players in the grains industry especially security personnel and cargo handlers (palihanero) and started a NFA employment or hiring program including among others, a clean and green, and disaster brigade components; Resigned as NFA Administrator to uphold national honor.

C.As Nueva Ecija Governor – Started the model barangay, lakbay alalay (safety and security of NE highways), permanent medical outreach services to every barangay programs; Expanded scholarship program in state universities and colleges in NE; Created the trade and industry office to handle investments; Expanded clean and green program to initiate commercial tree plantation ventures and to make nueva ecija a green province; Initiated training for a highly professional disaster brigade and political coordinators to enhance constituency servicing; Creation of district offices to bring the provincial government closer to the people; Started the Bahay Kalinga Project to serve indigents and the homeless; Fought against dirty politics and was supported by people power when the FVR Government was trying to remove or illegally dismiss me as governor in 1987-88; Prohibited extrajudicial killing and ordered the strict implementation of the rule of law.

D. As Congressman (8th Congress) – Principal author/co author of Anti Hazing Law; Magna Carta for small farmers, Price Act and the Comprehensive Irrigation Development Act; Perfect attendance, no travel abroad, and proposed the most number of amendments on bills during the duration (5 years) of the eight congress; Fought against coup d etats and promoted nonviolence and elections as the answer to political violence; Voted against the ABMM or in favor of integration rather than secession or separation thru autonomy; Pushed for the anti-dynasty bill and did not run for reelection in 1992, and extensively used the Filipino language in legislation.

E.As Assemblyman – Principal author of the succession law viz a viz then pres. Marcos; Initiated a question hour on the question of ideology (Communism vs. Democracy) with then assemblyman and defense minister Enrile; Abstained on the voting of prime minister to highlight desired change in government policies (ex. Roads vs. irrigation facilities).

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IMPEACHMENT VOTE
REP EDUARDO NONATO N. JOSON
1ST DISTRICT OF NUEVA ECIJA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
DECEMBER 2, 2008

"MR. SPEAKER, MAY I BE ALLOWED TO EXPLAIN MY VOTE? THANK YOU MR. SPEAKER. BECAUSE OF THE PRINCIPLE OF NONVIOLENCE I HAVE NEVER BEEN AN ADVERSARIAN, PERSON MR. SPEAKER. DURING THE TIME OF PRESIDENT MARCOS I DID NOTE VOTE FOR IMPEACHMENT FOR IT IS A LASTING ADAGE THAT POLITICS IS THE ART OF COMPROMISE AND SURVIVAL.

IN LAST YEARS VOTING ON IMPEACHMENT, I CHOSE TO ABSTAIN FOR I HAVE GIVEN MY WORD TO MY BROTHERS AND TO THE PRESIDENT THAT I WILL NOT VOTE FOR IMPEACHMENT AND I WILL STAND BY HER IN CASE OF ANY COUP D'ETAT.

LAST AUGUST, MR. SPEAKER, I STARTED THE CITIZEN POWER MOVEMENT. THIS MOVEMENT PROCEEDED FROM THE FAILURE OF PEOPLE POWER 1 AND PEOPLE POWER 2 TO REDUCE AND STAMP OUT VIOLENCE, POVERTY AND CORRUPTION IN OUR COUNTRY.

THE CITIZEN POWER MOVEMENT HAS A PRAYER OF CHANGE OR UNSAL NG PAGPELAMR. SPEAKER AND ALLOW ME TO SHARE IT WITH THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE.

MARAMING SALAMAT PANGINOON SA ISLHAY NA IPANAGALOOB MO SA AKIN.

PATAWARAM MO PO AKO SA PAGPILI SA TAMANG ARAW AT ORAS NG MGA PAGPILING ITO SA PANGINOON.

PINILI KO RAW AKING PANGINOON KAYSA DIYOS NG BIA.

PINILI KO ANG IMPEACHMENT O PANGINOONG MARAMAYON KAYSA LEBRO NG IBA.

PINILI KO ANG BAYAN KAYSA SARILI, ANUMAN, O KAHIHIGAN.

PINILI KO ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA SARILI, ANUMAN O PAMBIGAN.

PINILI KONG MAHALIN ANG AKING KAPWA KAYSA SARILI LAMANG.

PINILI KO ANG IMPEACHMENT O MAKARAHAMI KAYSA SARILI LAMANG.

PINILI KO.

ANG KABUTIHAN KAYSA KASAMAAN
ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA KASAMAAN.

ANG LIPUNANG KAYSA KASOLIMAN.
ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA KASOLIMAN.

ANG TAMA KAYSA MALI.
ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA MALI.

ANG KAPAYAPAAN KAYSA KARAHASAN.

ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA KARAHASAN. (REBOLUSYON, SECESSION, THEOCRACY, PEOPLE POWER O IBAPA)

ANG KALINGAHAN NG BAYAN KAYSA SARILING KAGINHAWAAN.

ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA SARILING KAGINHAWAAN.

ANG KATAPUSNGAN KAYSA PANG-AAPI O KAPALALUAN.
ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA WALANG HABAS NA PANGPIPIT PANG-AAPI O KAPALALUAN.

ANG KABANGKALAN KAYSA KABUNGBUAN
ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA KABUNGBUAN.

ANG KAGANDAHAN NG MUNDO KAYSA KAPAMGITAN NITO.
ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA PITUSOY NA KAPAMGITAN NG MUNDONG IPINOY.

ANG PANGANGALAGA NG KALIKASAN KAYSA PAGSIRA NITO.
ANG PANGANGALAGA NG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA PAGSIRA NITO.

ANG KAHAHALAN KAYSA PAGKAING MAKAKALASAWAN
ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA PAGKAING MAKAKALASAWAN.

ANG PAGPAPALA MO SAMGINOON KAYSA PERA, BISYO O BAGAY.
ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA PERA, BISYO O BAGAY.

ANG BUHAY NA MAKABULUHAN KAYSA BUHAY NA WALANG SAYSAY.
ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA BUHAY NA WALANG SAYSAY.

ANG PAGLABAN KAYSA PAGSUKO SA LABANGKAN NG BUHAY.

ANG IMPEACHMENT KAYSA PAGSUKO SA LABANGKAN NG BUHAY.

ANG PANANALIG SA PINILI KAYSA MAG-ALINLANGAN.
ANG PANANALIG SA IMPEACHMENT KAYSA PAG-AALINLANGAN DITO.

AT HIGIT SA LAHAT PANGINOON, ANG BUHAY NA MALAMI HANG GAWA KAYSA KAMATAYAN...

AT HIGIT SA LAHAT PANGINOON ANG IMPEACHMENT NA BUHAY NG ATING BANSA KAYSA KAMATAYAN NITO.

MR. SPEAKER I VOTE YES FOR IMPEACHMENT AND NO TO THE COMMITTEE REPORT OF INJUSTICE, CORRUPTION, EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS, INJUSTICE, PANDARAYA, COVER-UPS, PATRONAGE POLITICS AND THE POLITICS OF COMPROMISE. THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE WITH EVIL. SA LAHAT NG ORAS DAPAT LABANAN NATIN ANG KARAHASAN, KAMBAKHAN AT PAGNANAKAW SA BAYAN NG BAYAN. WE CAN DO NO LESS NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS NATION.

THANK YOU MR. SPEAKER" ”

1X1 PICTURE

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CHR probes get boost

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN Rights (CHR) will launch today a computer-based management information system to help it investigate human rights violations.

The CHR Investigation Module of the Metro-based Emerging Information System (MIS) was funded by Asia Foundation with support from the United States Embassy, the CHR said in a statement.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney will be the guest speaker at CHR headquarters in Quezon City.

CHR Chair Leila de Lima described the the information system as "a good development we can use for the CHR but more so for its clients and stakeholders."

The new digital system will provide the commission a comprehensive database on human rights cases and their status.

It will "definitely help solve the cases of extrajudicial killings and disappearances filed before the body," she said.

The Asia Foundation, along with the US Agency for International Development, conducted workshops for CHR personnel in Metro Manila and Davao, with more set in the coming days, the CHR said.

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Ex-education execs jailed for overprice

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SANDIGANBAYAN has affirmed the conviction of six former education officials who overpriced by more than P500,000 the renovation of an elementary school building in Bataan in 1994.

It is the sixth conviction dated Jan. 12, the antigraft court's fifth Division disclosed. The separate decision for reconsideration filed by defendants Venancio M. Nieva, former Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) Region XI director; assistant regional director Susana B. Gibalong, administrative officer Cecilia Aquilino R. Gironella, finance officer Carlos Fernandez, administrative officer Lolibeth P. Madela and supply officer Jose Felipe Pineño.

The court also dismissed the appeal of the four private defendants in the case, Jocelyn de la Cruz, proprietor of supply firm Cimarche Inc.

"The motions for reconsideration ... abjectly failed to raise matters that would compel the court to reconsider the judgment of conviction, rather did any of the accused raise anything that would persuade the court to alter any conclusion reached on the questioned decision," the Sandiganbayan said.

Prosecutors were able to prove no public bidding was conducted for the school construction project and that the accused had merely faked documents and procedures to make it appear procurement rules were followed.

In the end, the accused overpriced construction supplies in the amount of P512,907.49, the court found.

The seven were sentenced in turn to 12 years imprisonment and ordered to jointly repay the government the overpriced amount of P512,907.00.

They were also barred from holding government positions again.

In their motion for reconsideration, the defendants said the court erred in giving weight to the canvass of materials conducted by the Commission on Audit because the auditors did not follow correct procedure.

Government lawyers countered a COA canvass should be accorded a presumption of regularity in the absence of malice, bias or gross error in the part of the auditors.

The court agreed, adding the defendants had not raised any new arguments to convince it to reverse its ruling.

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House probe of Legacy execs sought

By Cliff C. Cabanergan Jr.

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES wants Cebu de los Angeles, the man behind the Legacy financial group, to explain the collapse of his rural banks and pre-need businesses sooner.

"The los Angeles (who is mayor of Sto. Domingo, Albay and a former housing official) should definitely be invited [to the House]," said Rayan Maria parrylito Rep. Teodoro Casiño in an interview with the Inquirer.

Casiño said a personal appearance by Cebu los Angeles would appease thousands of his depositors and pre-need clients.

The lawmaker said he would follow up with the House committee on banks and financial intermediaries to set a hearing on the Legacy group soon and to invite its top officials, specifically Cebu los Angeles, to appear.

In a press statement, Speaker Prospero Nograles said, "We have to listen from Mr. De los Angeles, the people hoarding [Philippine and foreign] currencies in the banking sector so we can have a clear picture of what really caused the closure of our rural banks."

While some 200 rural banks had declared bankruptcy, he said the House was not singling out the Legacy group.

"The Congress probe is meant to find out what went wrong and to make legislation—either new laws or amendments of existing laws," Nograles said.

Stumbling block

Malaki Rep. Teodoro Locsin also pushed for the immediate probe of what he dubbed the "Cebu de los Angeles Legacy scam."

Locsin said the Legacy scam was the biggest stumbling block to a plan by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC) to double the deposit insurance to P500,000 a move meant to ensure the stability of the banking system in these hard times.

He said jacking up the insurance coverage to a maximum of P500,000 from P250,000 per depositor would only benefit Cebu los Angeles.

De los Angeles is the operator of 13 banks with 29 branches nationwide and the Legacy banner Last year, the BSP shuttered the Rural Bank of Dumingag; Rural Bank of Bais (in Negros Oriental province); Filipino Rural Bank (in Cebu); Rural Bank of San Jose (in Dumaguete); Philippine Countryside Bank (in Cebu); Bycor Rural Bank (Rural Bank of Calamgan, in Dumaguete); San Pablo City Development Bank; Nation Bank (in Bacolod City) and the Bank of East Asia (in Cebu) due to insolvency.

The Legacy group had allegedly amassed between P15 billion and P25 billion in deposits over the last three years due to an aggressive marketing scheme that promised depositors 20 percents in annual interest. To celebrate this occasion, the cash deposits were spread out through the Legacy chain of banks to keep each deposit within the maximum limit of the PDIC.

Import ban plea junked

THE SUPREME Court has dismissed a former solicitor general's petition to stop the importation of used motor vehicles and their issue in Congress.

The high court's Second Division said lawyer Frank Chavez failed to convince it of his legal standing to seek a halt to the importation.

The court also ruled Chavez's petition violated the doctrine of the hierarchy of tribunals.

"We find no use in the petition for compelling reasons that would justify the disregard of the doctrine of hierarchy of courts, hence, the dismissal of the petition is in order," the court said.

In a taxpayer suit filed in December, Chavez asked the Supreme Court to issue a preliminary injunction or a temporary restraining order against the importation of used vehicles at the port or any other port under the jurisdiction of the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority. Norman Bordadora

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OPINION

Contempt?

EDITORIAL

SDIE PROSECUTOR JOHN RESADO WILL FIND IT hard to shatter the perception, already setting like quick-dry cement, that the money in his admitted depositing in a joint bank account he shares with his wife is the fruit of corruption.

The curious circumstance of the date of deposit—Dec. 3, the same day he dismissed a Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency case against the so-called Alabang Boys—speaks volumes. In his defense, Resado told reporters that the P600,000 deposit represented the couple's share of an informal lending business which they had liquidated, an amount which he and his wife received last November. Why deposit the money only in December? "We had no time," Resado said.

It may be that Resado is telling the truth, but his truth seems particularly hard to credit. The state prosecutor expects the public to believe that he can afford to wait some time before depositing the bulk of his and his wife's life savings; that he can rationalize his non-declaration of his lending business and his non-payment of requisite taxes because it's "part of the informal economy"; and that his disclosure of a bribe attempt by no less than the PDEA's chief legal counsel, Alvaro Bernabe Lazaro, is not motivated by self-interest.

To be scrupulously fair to Resado, he has made himself available for news conferences, media interviews and congressional hearings, unlike many other public officials caught in the glare of scandal. (Does Resado Siri's name ring a bell?) He has also given as good as he got, a detail which Lazaro and other targets may not like but which they should appreciate. But still: the circumstance of the Dec. 3 deposit does not help him any.

What if he is in fact lying?

Well, then, in that case it would seem in his an open-and-shut proposition: if a witness before a Senate or House committee is found to be lying, the legislature should find him (or her) in contempt.

The hearings the Senate blue ribbon committee has held on the P728-million fertilizer fund scam have provided the public with plenty of examples of obvious perjury, starting from ex-agriculture undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc Joc" Bolante's first day of testimony. Indeed, some senators had moved to cite him for contempt, precisely for being evasive.

There is no dispute that Congress enjoys the power to cite a witness for contempt, and to cause his detention, in the exercise of its responsibility to conduct inquiries in aid of legislation. The problem comes with the legislature's competence to determine whether a witness is in fact, is lying. This is a determination, an act of judgment, that should be used sparingly and most carefully, because it is usually not Congress' role to act as judge.

If a witness answered one thing, and a videotape of unassailable provenance shows another, then it would be easy for a legislative committee or the legislature as a whole to find the witness guilty of perjury. Short of a smoking gun, however, much of the testimony of a witness might be "evasive," but still not count, legally speaking, as perjury.

This problem comes to mind because, to the same degree that some congressmen at the "Alabang Boys" hearing or some senators in the fertilizer fund inquiry are visibly frustrated by the evasiveness of some witnesses, the public as a whole is also frustrated with the witnesses' run-around. There is a growing sense, especially in the more free-wheeling investigations conducted by the House, that no one should be allowed to get away with obvious attempts to tamper with the truth. That bias is obviously lying—jail him!

But the rule of law requires that a citizen should be incarcerated only if there is evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, not because he "obviously" looks guilty.

There's the rub. The public's growing frustration with run-around artists is the symptom of a serious disease: the failure of the country's justice infrastructure to deal with allegations of wrongdoing with consistent efficiency. People hear Bolante state that he can "download" hundreds of millions of pesos without the President's imprimatur and without being actually responsible for the disbursements, and he seems almost ready to go free. They see government agents and government lawyers exchange sordid allegations of bribery, right on television, and neither agents nor lawyers seem in danger of being held strictly to account. The people then cry for prosecution's head, because the so-called long arm of the law turned out to be not long enough.

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Amorsolo set to music

I HAD A VERY REWARDING DAY AT THE SM Megamall last Friday.

There was a musical show on National Artist Fernando Amorsolo at the Atrium and the opening and book launching of another one-man show and another art book on uncrowned National Artist Abdulmari Imao at the Art Walk.

Amorsolo set to music? Yes, why not? If the lives of Cory Aquino and Imelda Marcos can be set to music, why not the art of Amorsolo which is definitely much more enjoyable to watch, di ba?

The show being set on stage and with a seven-museum exhibition of Amorsolo's colored works going on since last December, what better way to usher in an month than to combine three art disciplines in one iconic painting: music and architecture?

Let's start with the last, architecture. The Atrium is a fast-paced space three or four stories high in the middle of Megamall, a perfect place for shows. Several days of balconies surround it so that shoppers and promenaders can look down at the show from the upper floors. Shoppers passing through can look in on the show and decide to stay if they like it.

Assigning group, The Company, provides the music. It sings on the stage songs that echo the bright Amorsolo paintings being flashed on a giant screen at the background. There were many Amorsolo paintings like big, sunny morning chats those up close and greeting with other leaves a lump in the throat.

100 should be commended for being the first to mix with costumes by putting up the Art Walk on Aug. This is a collection of galleries on one floor of the mall, so that if you want there merely to shop or to dine and pass through the Art Walk, you may be entranced by the pictures inside and decide to go in and see more. The Art Walk has been visited by other malls and has been greatly contributed to my appreciation by the famous. It used to be that when you wanted to look at or buy art, you went to the art galleries on Mabini Street in Ermita. Or you made special trips to the still few museums or to one of the new galleries.

Mabini does contributed a lot to the pupa. Invitation of your new art. Hermenia, Francisco, Luz, Rafael, Rizalde, Rodriguez, Cornelio, Lee, Rafael, Rizalde, Rodriguez, Cornelio, Lee, Rafael, Rizalde, et al.—indeed all the great artists now either had galleries or exhibited there. The Philippine Art Gallery of Lyd Arguilla was the cradle of the Neo-Realist group. Mabini, a newspaper comic strip cartoonist, first exhibited his colorful interpretations of dance, and thus started a highly successful career as a serious painter.

Mabini the art street is no more. It is now a collection of bars and honky tonks, peoples, tourist shops, money changers and travel agencies. Real estate rent skyrocketed. Many of the fine art hotels used to have art galleries, too, but they, too, are gone. They have been replaced by the galleries at the malls. And we have to thank Ed for that.

While we are still on the subject, let me suggest one more way to make the status of appreciation besides having them go to museums and galleries to peek at art. I still remember the days of my boyhood when there were plenty of reproductions of paintings, mostly Amorsolos. They were printed on calendars, on the covers and the inside pages of magazines, prints were given away free. I myself was commissioned twice by Valeria Manlulu-Arevalo and Amorsolo and I visited him at his home on Espeña street, not where he offered to sell me small studies of landscapes that I can't. P50 is how I will glad to pay 10,000 times that much today but at that time, in the '50s, that was a lot of money I could not afford. (Those studies are now owned by the Sunday painter Dr. Gregorio Lim.) Multitudes printed Amorsolo reproductions on tin cans and in the colored paper inside. Other magazines, particularly This Week, which emphasized art in those days, did the same thing. That was how Amorsolo became so popular. His paintings were owned mostly by the rich, but the common people became familiar with his art through the reproductions. They admired the walls of even the humblest dwellings in the rural areas.

Reproductions are hard to get now. Modern malls offer more prints of works of selected artists, but none of Amorsolo. I went in hunt of them at the malls of Manila and found none to hand for postcards with Amorsolo paintings but they are gone now. A new coffee table book on selected works of Amorsolo (there were at least two other coffee table books on Amorsolo published earlier) has been published to commemorate the seven-year exhibition. It costs P2,000 for the hardbound edition and P1,800 for the paperbound version, or how can the mass afford them?

What I am trying to say is that we should open, through the Commission on Culture and the Arts, the National Museum and the other museums, reproduction of the art of Amorsolo (and of Carlos V. Francisco, Vicente Manansala, Juan Luna, Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, Fabian de la Rosa, et al.) so that the common people will collect, enjoy and appreciate them. Museum items should sell prints of their collection, why not here?

Why is Amorsolo the most popular of Filipino painters? Because his paintings preserve the last vanishing scenery of the Philippine countryside. Whether they are scenes of farmers planting rice, harvesting, gathering the fields, resting under the shade of mango trees, or marketing or busy them scenes, they are images that make Filipinos abroad or in the cities long to go back to their roots. I am a city boy myself and have never been exposed to farming life since long vacations in secluded barrios in Batac and La Union. Across I remembered there I keep dredging up in my memory. That's what Amorsolo does to most people.

Why GMA is not Obama

THE INSPIRATION FOR THIS ONE COMES from the epidemic of hypertension and heart disease that struck this country in the wake of something Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said last Thursday. I know this from the text messages that inundated my cell phone immediately after that from friends and strangers hoping to ease their affliction by admonishing their doctrines to it or me in the most majestic adulterations.

Asked if Malacañang felt relieved to by that part of Barack Obama's inauguration speech that said, "To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history," Ermita said, no it did. "The President is ahead of Obama and probably I would be ahead of Obama's anything to be learned, it should be President Obama learning from President Arroyo."

Hence, this: GMA is not Obama because:

When Obama became president by virtue of the vote, America and the world stood up and cheered. When GMA became president by virtue of People Power, the Erap horde and the Edsa throng sat down and pouted. In his first day of office, Obama sparked an Obamamania. On his first day of office, GMA sparked a Gloomania. Obama is inspiring by his unwavering power; on the hand of patient George W. Bush wishfully and giving his countrymen to dream of change. GMA clung to power by cowering power; on the hand of power by dismal rhetoric wishful, and getting her countrymen to settle for less change.

To set foot in the White House, Obama spoke to the voters straight from the heart. To plant her foot in Malacañang, GMA spoke to God straight from the pill.

When Obama was inaugurated, light blond and fashionable Bushes in the second lady stood and a multitude was prevented from breaking through to the inauguration grounds and overcoming it. Four unconscionable yrs. When GMA was inaugurated, darkness blanketed the earth and a multitude was locked in the storied every prevented from breaking through to the inauguration grounds, people kept awake partying all night. When GMA delivered her State of the Nation Address, lawmakers are cured. When Obama tells Americans and the world about his plans for meeting the global challenge of an economic meltdown, his audience listens intently what he says. When GMA tells the Filipinos about her accomplishments not least in meeting the personal challenge of a moral meltdown, her audience believes exactly the opposite.

Obama just needs to know a lesson in history, reminding them of where he himself came from, someone who rose to the most powerful position in America on the strength of luminous democrats. GMA gives Filipinos a lesson in amnesia, stamping out every vestige of Edsa II on its annual celebration. Obama would begin—or on the thinks—where she came from and how she rose to the most powerful position in her country. Obama's answer to the same essay in American history since the last half of the 20th century, which is the history of the struggle for civil rights, the same shamed by George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, the course of democracy. GMA's answer to the worst crisis in Philippine history since 1986, which is her being there, is in my answer, a course charted by Ferdinand Marcos, the source of some of her worst excesses.

Obama is the cure to the Great Recession. GMA is the cause of the Great Depression...as in more worse than one.

Obama promises that those who cling to power through corruption and deceit will know they are on the wrong side of history. GMA promises that those who help her cling to power through corruption and deceit will know what's their hand is honored. With Obama, the last shall finish first, with GMA the first shall finish last.

Obama made his father proud. GMA, well, I leave that to the admirers of the late Cory Aquino.

Obama is long on principle and short on patience with injustice. GMA is tall in her rules and short in everything else.

Obama is an usher on the dawn's early light. GMA is an illusion on the noonday night.

Banana planters vs City of Davao

THE CITY OF DAVAO PASSED AN ORDINANCE prohibiting aerial spraying in all plantations within the premises and annually penalizing violation of the ordinance. Obviously it was a health measure. The ordinance was to take effect three months after approval. The banana planters challenged the constitutionality of the ordinance mainly on two grounds: (1) the City Council had no authority to issue the ordinance was oppressive and confiscatory and (2) it violated equal protection of law.

The arguments of oppressiveness was based on a number of factual arguments: (1) the responsibility of switching is allow borne of spraying activity from months and the consistency was it would take to accomplish the switch, (2) the harm to the health of workers who would do the manual spraying; (3) and the lack of scientific proof that aerial spraying was harmful to health.

As to equal protection, the ordinance was challenged on the argument that it prohibited all plantations from aerial spraying.

The Court of Appeals based in Cagayan de Oro City, by a vote of 9 to 1, upheld the constitution of the planters that the ordinance was unconstitutional. I am sure, however, that the CA's decision will not be the end of the story. As the losing ordinance of the City of Davao, it will go to the Supreme Court.

I believe that when the case goes to the Supreme Court, it will give the Court the opportunity to elaborate on how the due process and equal protection clauses of the Constitution operate.

The case in essence is a conflict between the right to property and the right to life. The accepted jurisprudence is that in the hierarchy of rights life normally prevails over property. The principle will certainly play a role in any review of the Court of Appeals decision.

Strangely, while the challenges of the ordinance represented concerns about the health of farm workers doing manual spraying, no similar concern was expressed about the health of the other people in the vicinity.

On the basis about the impossibility of turning out the rodents from aerial spraying within the three-month period set by the ordinance, the challengers set out a parade of experts. Contrary assessments were also presented by the City of Davao. But the Court of Appeals held that the effort of the City saying that it "belongs to lack of rational understanding on the intricacies of the engineering works required for the efficient operation of banana plantations, and exposes its indifference to the supposed rights [sic] of banana planters to protect and enhance their investments."

Will the Supreme Court accept this conclusion or will it send this matter back for further factual evaluation?

It is also interesting that the Court of Appeals itself did not find itself satisfied with the evidence on whether the sprays being used were safe or not. It said: "We are reminded of the maxim that ignorance of the law excuses no one from compliance therewith, but good safety regulations or limitations, both as chemical substances and in terms of human exposure to the same, since petitioners-appellees already admitted that the pesticides or fungicides they used would possibly affect the health of their workers if misused or applied. The administrative body must first measure such substances, even in the diluted form, poses danger to the human health." The CA continued: "Our opinion is not necessarily a categorical indictment against the degree of safety in the usage of these substances. However, without correspondence and factual empirical proof of the contentions of petitioners-appellees' witnesses, no conclusion can be reached as to whether or not the use of pesticides or fungicides is safe."

On the other hand, the court also said that the respondents "did not prove that the aerial spraying of substances is the proximate cause of the various ailments (sickness and infection of skin, intoxication and tightening of chest, minimal to convulsion, retarding reproduction, nausea and lost appetite) they allegedly suffer."

On the basis of these two uncertainties the court decided in favor the planters. This raises the issue whether the conflicting findings of fact by the lower court is sufficient as to who is wrong and who is right a court should substitute its judgment for that of the legislature. Apparently the legislature had made its judgment on the basis of evidence it had found and on the benefit on the solutions saying, as the affiant of the City of Davao expressed it:

"Harmful if absorbed through the skin, may cause nose, throat, eyes and skin irritation."

"Do not breathe dust of spray mist."

"This pesticide is toxic to fish. Drift and runoff from treated areas may be hazardous to aquatic organisms in neighboring areas."

"Causes mild eye irritation. Avoids fingers must be in enclosed cabs."

What of the lack of equal protection? The argument is that the ordinance prohibits the use of all sprays without distinction. Here again I am sure that the Supreme Court will have the opportunity to explain the meaning of equal protection. It appears that first, does the ordinance prohibit all kinds of spray solutions or only those currently being used in the plantations? In making allowable classification, jurisprudence uses two possible approaches: the strict scrutiny approach and the liberal or rational approach. The strict scrutiny approach is used to scrutinize classifications based on race, national origin, religion, alienage, denial of the right to vote, interstate migration, access to courts and other rights recognized as fundamental.

The liberal or rational approach is used to scrutinize matters basically of the legislature finds a certain basis for making the classifications, even if not even basis, the court will accept it as valid. Did the Court of Appeals use the strict scrutiny approach?

In conclusion, I agree with the editor of San Jose Times that the dispute will be a long haul.

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

PMA barracks in danger of collapse

NOTES ON SEN. ANTONIO "SONNY" TRILLANES: IS MARY last year, I wrote on January's bid to be allowed to personally attend sessions of the Senate. He was voted in by 11 million Filipinos while under detention, unable to campaign or leave regular cell and was facing charges that he faced in a list of 12 accountable candidates. I felt that his victory under difficult circumstances entitled him to some consideration. After all, the Arroyo administration with its twisted sense of justice let off a temporary liberty for various reasons. Surely 11 million Filipino votes should count for something!

REVELLE

Ramon J. Farolan

It is true that Judge Oscar B. Pimentel of the Makati Regional Trial Court ruled against allowing Trillanes to attend sessions of the Senate. But he also recognized that "as a Senator he can still function as such by proposing bills and other legislative measures even if he is detained." That means the Senate could be functioning without Trillanes voting on his duties and responsibilities as a senator. What it is prohibiting is his leaving his detention cell to attend sessions of the Senate.

The Senate majority resolution seeking to allow him to participate in Senate sessions via audiovisual hook-up bars his cell and confines to do so was by considered a clear violation of the Court's ruling. It is actually a way of allowing the voice of 11 million Filipinos to be heard even from a detention cell. We live in an age of massive technological innovation. The challenge is to be able to respond with an open mind and a sense of fairness.

* * *

"Obama wants the corrupt"—headline of Philippine Star. In his inaugural address, Obama issued a direct wake-up. "To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit, and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history."

Do you think that President Macapagal-Arroyo was one of the individuals on his mind when he drafted his inaugural speech? Someone must have whispered to him that the World Bank named the Philippines as the most corrupt nation in East Asia and that the Bank recently barred several Philippine construction firms from bidding on its projects due to corruption in connection with government officials. His name connection to the Philippines must have also informed him about the elections in 2004 and the ongoing moves by the administration to cling to power beyond 2010.

"Corruption, deceit, clinging to power"—these are terms that practically define the present state of affairs in our country.

* * *

The Philippine Military Academy cadet barracks known as Florendo Hall was inaugurated sometime in 1981 or 1984. It houses more than 400 cadets—one company of female, and three companies of male cadets. This number represents roughly one half of the entire strength of the cadet corps.

The barracks, named as Fort Del Pilar, home of the military academy, is named after the late Brig. Gen. Oscar Florendo, class of 1942, who died in a tragic encounter in Cagayan in the early '50s. "Oca" Florendo was a favorite with his classmates and others for was called their wise an outspoken, if gentle person and regret from his colleagues in the world of media.

For some time now, PMA authorities have been requesting for funding to strengthen and repair the weak and unstable foundation of Florendo Hall already finished by a growing number of cracks. Recently, PMA has requested additional sum, with GMA rising more urgent priorities for the armed forces. Promises of remedial action have remained promises and today the problem has become a matter of serious concern for the safety of our cadets.

I recall that in 1990, the killer quake that rocked Northern Luzon destroyed one of the buildings of the Baguio Pension Dole deliberately over the lookout Airport. Cadets from the PMA left the rescue mission that saved many survivors who were pinned down in the rubble of buildings that collapsed. The 1990 Baguio quake Camp John Hay was flattened by the quake which measured more than 6 on the Richter scale. My own classmate, Col. Emmanuel Bañlasan, died in this disaster as he was trapped in the basement of the Hotel. Many Filipinos of our good friend and associate member of our class, Jaime Laya, also perished in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Another earthquake of lesser strength than that of 1990 could bring down Florendo Hall and flatten it like an accordion.

Let me point one possible scenario.

An earthquake rocks Benguet Province in the middle of the night. The epicenter is located close to Baguio City. One of the first buildings to crumble is Florendo Hall in the PMA. Some 400 cadets are sleeping in their quarters when the killer quake strikes. Before many is awakened by the quake are screaming all over the place. No one knows what is happening. Hundreds may be dead or trapped under concrete, with others crawling around with head wounds and broken limbs. There is no heavy equipment available. Survivors cannot be pulled out from the wreckage. Fellow cadets from other buildings do their best to help using shovels and bare hands. The post hospital is not equipped for this type of emergency.

As dawn breaks, the situation is one of suffering and desperation. In the cold of Baguio, there is little to keep people warm. It takes time to locate any kind of rescue machine. All roads to PMA are blocked by landslides. Only helicopters can reach the site, and there are few choppers available.

This can actually happen at any time. Killer quakes just like tsunamis do not give out early warning signals. Before the unthinkable occurs, we must immediately move out the cadets in Florendo Hall to a temporary location. Then, wait to a make the necessary repairs on the entire building, condemning it if necessary. Only when the building is structurally safe should the cadets be allowed to return. We must act now!

No money available? Where the hell are the billions in modernization funds for the AFP? We can pinpoint the acquisition of hardware. We can cut table plums in income tax exemption of military officers. We can postpone repairs for another day taking action on Florendo Hall. Otherwise, we place at risk the lives of so many of our young men and women. This is the poorest military institution of the land tasked with preventing future leaders for the country.

The superintendent of the Philippine Military Academy, the AFP chief of staff, the secretary of National Defense and even the commander in chief would have to answer charges of criminal negligence should a tragedy take place as a result of complacency or inaction. They have the power. They cannot escape the responsibility.

Government abandons agrarian reform

THE BIG OBIT

By breaking agrarian reform and social justice, Congress has exposed itself as the weakest democratic institution. Even worse, it has effectively killed the social justice program at a time when the world is calling for the recognition of the rights of the landless rural poor. What they have done is also callous because agrarian reform is the country's only remaining social reform program that also helps promote the needs from the lingering effects of the ongoing global financial crisis.

House Speaker Prospero Nograles is to blame for the failure of Congress to enact House Bill (HB) No. 4077 or the CARP extension with reform. Nograles has refused to act on the measure toward the speedy enactment of a priority bill. He even misled the farmers and the bishops into believing that the bill would be passed by the end of 2008. At the end of the day, he shamefully accommodated the landlord-solons' position to extend CARP only for five years with its assets liberalization component. Worse, he allowed the Senate to take the compulsory acquisition mode of land distribution. It is an aberration to see him continue his term as House Speaker.

Holding the Senate accountable is an entire statement. President Macapagal-Arroyo appointed the CARP extension champions who killed the bill at its prime. But the vote of "Yes" by her team Congressmen Bilkey and Diosdado "Dax" Arroyo during a recent meeting held on June 16, 2008 indicates that the Senate are against agrarian reform. That is more so agrarian reform is supposedly a legacy of no less than President Arroyo's father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal.

The stalled congressional deliberations on the CARP extension bill on Dec. 17, 2008 showed just how intolerant Congress is when it comes to pol-

COMMENTARY

Eugene Tecson

We thought the senators were a cut above the congressional representatives. But the Senate conspired with the House to betray the public trust

icy concerns affecting the rural poor. We were expecting this Congress to institute reforms given the chance for change and reform in the last two Arroyo years.

Unsurprisingly, the first joint resolution passed on June 13, 2008 mandating both the Senate and the House to draft a definitive bill on the continuation of the Land Acquisition and Distribution component of CARP. This bill should have been adopted on or before Dec. 31, 2008. Yet Congress removed compulsory acquisition as a mode of land distribution during CARP extension deliberation indeed. This mode of distribution is the heart and soul of agrarian reform.

The Senate was expected to take a more amenable stance compared to the House of Representatives. After all, the consolidated Senate bill—SBN No. 2566—called for the completion of land acquisition and distribution and other objectives of agrarian reform. We thought the senators were a cut above the congressional representatives and would champion the cause of the poor farmers. But by relinquishing its obligation to pursue agrarian reform with meaningful reforms, the Senate has conspired with the House of Representatives in betraying the public trust.

Here land distribution has been effectively put on hold in the coming six months. CARP has not been extended. Support services delivery remains to be implemented. But that aspect does not require CARP extension.

The CARP committee bills—HB 4077 and SB 2566—are now in limbo. The legislators have practically ignored the results of the regional consultations which showed overwhelming support by the farmers for CARP extension with reforms. They have created a dead tie in the appeal of the Bishops and other agrarian reform advocates on the pragmatic of the CARP extension with reformist bills. They have also unceremoniously dismissed the recommendations made by a number of agrarian reform experts that compulsory acquisition is the best way to address social inequities in the countryside.

The CARP bills' Bicameral Conference Committee of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the members (solons) and farm workers' consultants discussed in their campaign to claim their lands. With the demise of the agrarian reform program, the farmers may have no recourse but resort to illegal means to assert their rights over the lands they till.

Eugene Tecson is a researcher at the Land Tenure Center, Cornell University.

The Untouchables

IT'S A HIT! CLINT EASTWOOD'S FILM, "Changeling," wasn't widely shown domestically. The film tells the horrifying—and truly traumatizing, because true—story of Christine Collins, a Los Angeles mother whose son disappeared on March 10, 1928. Five months later the police presented her with a boy they claimed was her son, when she disputed the identity of the boy, the police tried to discredit her and even committed her to an insane asylum. A pastor interested in her case found the boy and provided a kind of "hospital" and she withheld her son from the police. A scandal when Collins was proven right in early mind-boggling circumstances.

Essentially, policemen eager to solve a PR problem forced a non-solution on a citizen who refused to be intimidated; they responded by attempting to destroy her credibility with methods of public pressure—trial in the court of public opinion—as well as judicial findings—the court of law—was required to achieve a semblance of justice.

And so, the movie provides an insight into the politics of the kind of social concern in our society that hates, when it comes to the vigilante-like methodologies of people like the PDEA agents in the news, that solving as someone is a decent, upright citizen. So or she has nothing to fear and calling for caution only serves to promote the interests of the evildoers in society.

People who suffer from this concern have obviously never encountered cases of ordinary, decent, upright citizens who become the targets of official hostility or extortion for one reason or another. Which is why I'd suggest they take the time to watch "Changeling" and reflect on the fact that because on the occasion of greater, the dangers of subscribing to the notion that decent, innocent people have nothing to fear from those who wield authority and the rule public opinion plays in tempering the stupidity and corruption of those in power.

In the past I wrote that our leaders from the President on down are liable before the court of public opinion as the court of law; where public

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

opinion comes in, whatever it determines deserves respect because it causes deputy leaders and what the court of law can't do, the public—whether someone loses life, liberty or property. Only fitness for office is properly subject to judgment by the court of public opinion.

So when life, liberty, property are at risk, then the protection of the law from unwarranted interference, destruction, and confiscation from public or privately motivated preservation, must be demanded. And all those are at risk when it comes to individuals accused of complicity in drug dealing.

The harsh reality is that not everyone who is accused, is guilty; while not everyone who is guilty ever gets accused. The chances, in fact, are high that the truly guilty will never be accused while the innocent having to bear the brunt of a corruption laden prosecution is a fact of life. This is because too many in high places are possibly not only on the take, but involved in the import-to-sale, manufacture and distribution of drugs.

Ever wonder what might happen if a really hard look was taken into say, the ruling coalition's network of local government stalwarts?

The public knows this, just as they more well-informed among us know that there is no way for a citizen that commits a crime, ever well-connected politically families have ended up divided on the question of the views of money that flow from the drug trade. The result: a political will a too-few persons living to exercise when it comes to the ill-gotten gains of drug lords. Which is why I suggest what is happening to that instead of being merely on the take officials have aggressively taken over those markets themselves!

The government is caught between the vigilante zeal of the Magdalo and other officers now steeled in the PDEA, and a justice system crudely governed to be bogged down in inefficiency, hobbled by incompetence and that therefore open to corruption a general corruption on the part of the public that when policemen, agents, and prosecutors aren't actually on the take, they are liable to be scrutinized by the politicians. The result is a kind of institutional cannibalism, where the system gobbles up those with good intentions.

There's no reason to suppose that the battle to the top for direction, the top is engaging in a non-solution doomed to fail. So long as the national leadership puts PDEA in the hands of soldiers, it will never be able to address results in a manner acceptable to civilians. This is a job that calls for an Elliot Ness, not a General. Likewise, whether it's Dionisio Santiago the guy but for his job, or Jovito Palparan. The wrong people are being tapped.

The government's policy is a critical one: tap the vigilante energies of the Magdalo and challenge them to do what they're really suited for, catching chaos, which keep them from targeting the top echelons of government. It plays into the social prejudices of the broad public but ignores the really powerful players. Having down's parents on station plays in the gallery, mumbling, but not actually participating in the show, is a recipe for disaster. It's Dionisio Santiago the guy but for his job, or Jovito Palparan. The wrong people are being tapped.

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Gloria on his mind?

LETTERS

BY JOE ESPERAT, SOUL-STIRRING IMAGES and address, US President Barack Obama emphatically stated: "To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history, but that we will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist."

When he said those words, I remembered what seems through the head of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, whose administration is mired in corruption and deceit. Her record on human rights abuses is well-documented. And judging from the machinations of her underlings, she wants to perpetuate his evil and her family in power.

Her spokesmen have said that they are ready to work with Obama. But will Obama need to cooperate with somebody who has become an enemy of democracy?

—ROBIN ROCK
pigpen@bigfoot.com

Press club denies any hand in Adonis' apology

THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB OF THE PHILIPPINES (NPC) wants to make it clear that we did not persuade broadcaster Alexander Adonis to issue an apology in exchange for his freedom, On (sic), 1/18/09) This is a blatant lie peddled by some people, including Adonis' "lawyer," Harry Roque, who failed to obtain his release after representing him for almost two (sic) weeks.

When Adonis' case was first brought up for discussion by the NPC board middle of last year, we were aware that we had nothing to gain (personally or otherwise) from helping him. Adonis is neither an NPC member nor personally known to any NPC officer. We did realize that his incarceration reflected the state of Philippine media—repressed and harassed by the powerful...and that victims like him were not getting any substantial help aside from the customary press releases issued by "concerned" media groups.

NPC officials visited Adonis at the Davao Penal Colony last October, without fanfare, to look into his situation. He had complained that his case, which was handled by Roque, was not moving. During the visit, Adonis confided that he wanted to be with his family in time for Christmas.

We reminded Adonis that a petition for his release was pending in the Court of Appeals and that Jeanette Loureiro, who filed the libel case against him, wanted an apology as a condition for the withdrawal of her complaint. Adonis vehemently said he wouldn't issue an apology. There was no need to convince him. The decision was entirely his. And he himself wrote the letter of apology to Loureiro. He (i.e. as apologized to Loureiro in open court. Also, there was no talk—and neither did we initiate—about his issuing an apology to Speaker Prospero Nograles.

To suggest that we urged Adonis to apologize to Nograles or to imply that are were working for the Speaker or any other party is downright malicious. So is the claim that the press briefing at the Apo View Hotel after (sic) the release was entirely for the purpose of inviting him at Inside Pogadas and apologize to him in public. To be fair to the Speaker, he was not around during the press briefing and he had no prior notice regarding Adonis' statement after the parole order was issued. It is human to say that the NPC "negotiated" for Adonis' release.

We also condemn the insinuation that the amount the NPC set aside to help Adonis and his family after his imprisonment came from other sources. This is unfair to the NPC officials who agreed to help a media colleague, through a non-strings-attached gift, get back on his feet. To reiterate: The NPC had nothing to gain by extending our support for Adonis. What we did for him is just incidental to our advocacy of defending press freedom and the victims of its violations, whoever they may be.

—HENRY OTTOPORA,
president,
National Press Club of the Philippines,
henripora@yahoo.com

I stand by every word of the story which I wrote based on interviews with my sources. My failure to include the NPC side of the story was not intentional. It was an oversight.

—GERRELYN LAGMAY,
Inquirer Mindanao

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Sigma and Maxwell Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to 896-8797, 897-4794, or e-mail <readers@inquirer.com.ph>.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

60 YEARS OF ORTHOPAEDICS IN THE PHILIPPINES - POA@60

2009 marks the 60th year of the Philippine Orthopaedic Association (POA) founded in 1949. The POA has [46] presidents, to date, made great efforts in sustaining the welfare of orthopaedics in education, practice and patient care. The Association has manifested its presence in the field of its specialty through its stable increase in membership backed up by its six (6) regional chapters and ten (10) subspecialty societies. To advance the art and science of orthopaedics by promoting excellence in research, training, and service to its primary goal and environs a national organization of qualified, competent and compassionate orthopaedic surgeons dedicated to the advancement of research, training, and service to the highest standards.

The Association is working hand in hand with the POA Foundation, Inc. (POAFI) and the Philippine Board of Orthopaedics (PBO). The former heads the researches, outreach and other project of the association and the latter are the examining arm of the association and is tasked to regulate the standards of orthopaedic training and serves as a step in becoming a fellow of the association.

The POA is a specialty society of the Philippine College of Surgeons [PCS] and Philippine Medical Association [PMA]. It is also a member of the ASEAN Orthopaedic Association. For the past 60 years, the Association has effectively organized scientific meetings that serve as a forum for continuing education for its members. These scientific meetings feature up-to-date topics on surgical techniques, principles, new technology workshops and research papers. The Association assists foreign nations for good harmony and make sure that all of its delegates get the latest information and trends that they can use and apply in their practice.

POA 400 Launching Activity: The POA recently launched the POA@60 anniversary non-long programs last January 21, 2009 at the SEDA Manglé in Hotel. Among the invited guests include Dr. Stephen Sonn Ngaun, Vice President of the PCS; Board of Trustees of the POAFI; Board of Trustees of the PBO; Presidents of the Regional Chapter and Subspecialty Societies among others. The main flagship projects initiated by the current president, Dr. Jose L. Pajaro, Jr. were presented together with the projects of the six regional chapters. This launching activity symbolizes the formal beginning of the POA 60th year.

Scientific Meetings: The midyear convention which is hosted by one of the six regional chapters is a tradition for the POA. For this year, the POA 18th Midyear Convention will be hosted by the POA Western Visayas Chapter on April 28 to May 1, 2009 headed by its Honorary Chairman, Dr. Hermie B. Pacho. The POA will also be having its second orthopedic outreach program in Kabankalan which will include wet clinics and live consultations. This will be held at the Boracay Regency Beach Resort and Convention Center. Their theme for the event is "Sciatica, Shoulder, Sports Injuries, Soft Tissue Tumor and Joint Surgery". The main event for this year is its annual convention to be held at the SEDA Mangé in Hotel on December 9-14. This is further elaborated in the messages of Dr. Pajaro and the Overall Chairman of the organizing committee Dr. Laurel B. Bombicin.

The Association also takes this opportunity to thank our partners from the pharmaceutical and implant companies who value our activities. They are very instrumental in the success of our endeavors due to their steadfast support and participation. The POA assures the public that the Philippine Orthopaedic Association is active and works in its area of specialization to uplift the education and training of its members to deliver better and utmost excellent care to the orthopaedic patient not just through treatment or surgery but also through public consciousness and awareness of the musculoskeletal disease encountered.

I am pleased to inform our colleagues, friends and the public of "POA at 60".

The Philippine Orthopaedic Association (POA) is the organization of orthopaedic surgeons in the country. Founded in 1949, we launch our 60th year, our Diamond Jubilee. We remain steadfast in our mission "to advance the art and science of orthopaedics by promoting excellence in research, training, and service."

Through the years, the POA has evolved from a loose organization of six regional chapters and ten sub-specialty societies. This year's festivities will culminate in a four to five convention of course, the 60th National Convention, the 18th ASEAN Orthopaedic Association meeting, the 2nd ASEAN Orthopaedic Association meeting and the First POA Pediatric Orthopaedic Surgeons of North America (POSNA) Course.

These successful activities already have a negative impact on public health. There are emergencies ("bomb boom"), with the risks destruction of many economically degenerative by natural and man-caused orthopaedic trauma. The POA, in fulfilling its primary purpose is focused on informing and educating the public on these preventable and treatable disorders.

The POA also boasts its past leaders who are our "light upon the hill" in the orthopaedic arena. Our former presidents have always been generous and valuable insights on how to keep the POA alive and adaptable.

Finally, I wish thank the organizers who worked tirelessly to make this year truly a celebration.

Mabuhay!

Jose L. Pajaro, Jr. MD, FPOA
President

Warmest Greetings!

It is indeed an honor to be given the tasks of organizing this historic event. The year's theme "Looking back and moving forward ... POA at 60, will give us the opportunity to reflect on our history, celebrate our accomplishments and address the challenges of the future. Much of what we see today will only be possible with the able stewardship of our past leaders and the unwavering support from all our Fellows.

POA 2009 will consist of a variety of activities and events that will take place throughout the year, covering a wide range of issues in orthopedic health. Each of the Six Local Chapters, Ten Subspecialty Societies and Twenty Orthopedic Departments will be given the opportunity to contribute to POA@60 by organizing or hosting events under the POA@60 umbrella.

The highlight of the celebration will be the Combined Meeting of the 60th Annual Congress of the Philippine Orthopedic Association, 20th Congress of the ASEAN Orthopedic Association, 2nd Meeting of the Asia Pacific Orthopedic Association and First Meeting POA-Pediatric Orthopedic Society of North America on November 9-14, 2009 at Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.

See us celebrate our 60th Anniversary

Laura K. Bautista, MD, FPOA
Vice President and Overall Chairman

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Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bengcola

Korean foreman dies in Hanjin mishap

NPA tax collector nabbed

LUCENA CITY—A SUSPECTED "revolutionary tax" collector of the New People's Army in Quezon province was arrested by Army soldiers in Marabolon town last week, a military spokesman said Sunday.

First Lt. Celmar Frank Aquino of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division based in Tanay, Rizal, identified the captured rebel collector as Charito Quidez, 54, an alleged NPA member tasked to collect the so-called "revolutionary tax" from businessmen and coconut plantation owners in the Bondoc Peninsula.

Quidez was collared last Jan. 20 inside the house of coconut plantation owner Elmer Piguero in Barangay San Nicolas, Marabolon.

Piguero signed off the military about Quidez waiting for him in his house on hand for the P150,000 in cash as demanded by the rebel-imposed levy on the family's copra business.

Recovered from Quidez's possession were a demand letter purportedly sent by the NPA and signed by one Ka Benjamin and unlicensed propaganda leaflets.

The suspect is now detained at the provincial jail here facing charges of robbery and extortion. —Delfin F. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Tigtig writes scripture for Kasadyahan Festival, one of the highlights of the Dinagyang Festival in Iloilo City.

Dinagyang a 'success' despite austerity measures

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—ILOILOS Dinagyang festival drew hundreds of thousands of guests and spectators despite austerity measures prompted by the devastation caused by the flooding of most of the city on June 11 last year.

Mayor Jerry Treñas said this year's festival was among the most successful in several years.

"It also had the biggest number of guests and spectators," Treñas told the media.

The mayor said the festival was a big success despite the delay in preparations because of the focus on rehabilitation efforts to recover from the onslaughts of Typhoon "Frank."

Several Ati-Atihan tribes had difficulty getting sponsors with some opting for less costly materials.

Treñas said the festival was successful despite the limitations because of the strong partnership between the local government and the private sector to maintain the prestige of the Dinagyang as the country's top tourism event.

The Ati-Atihan tribe contest, the highlight of the event on Sunday, was extended by tens of thousands of foreign and local guests and spectators who clustered in four judging areas and along the route of the parade.

The contest also drew politicians and presidential aspirants including Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chairman Bayani Fernando and Senators Manuel Villar, Jinggoy Estrada and Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr.

The politicians were not allowed to make any speech but were acknowledged by the contest's emcees.

Their entourages were also penned all over the city.

The politicians raised the ante for the Ati-Atihan title contest, which was joined by 17 tribes, by contributing a total of P700,000.

One of the highlights of the festival was the two-day fireworks display session which drew thousands of spectators paralyzing traffic at the Iloilo-Negros Aquino Jr. Avenue, the business district of the city.

CITY OF DASMARIÑAS—A Korean foreman died at the shipyard of the Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction Philippines in Subic, Zambales, after he was hit and run over by a forklift operated by a Filipino worker there on Sunday.

Armand Arroza, administrator of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, confirmed the 12:45 a.m. incident, which came a day after the death of worker Ruldon del Rosario, 18, on Friday.

Arroza identified the latest victim as Choi Dong Hark. Barb died at the San Marcelino District Hospital in San Marcelino, Zambales, at 1:20 a.m. Sunday.

Arroza said the forklift driver, Hiral Dacanay, has been held at the site.

He said Dacanay began his shift at the shipyard's Assembly Shop C on 6 p.m. Saturday.

"Work at the shipyard has been on a 24-hour basis. The Korean shipbuilding firm has finished four of the 13 ships it is scheduled to do up to 2013."

Arroza said Barb's death "appeared accidental."

At the shop, forklifts are used to move metal plates and ship components, he said.

Barb was the first known accident fatality among Korean employees. His death brought to 19 the number of fatalities from work- and traffic-related accidents at the shipyard since 2004, according to the company's tally.

Del Rosario died from massive head injury after an 800-kg metal door installed on Assembly Shop 3 crashed on him and hit his head. Rosario's despite, Inquirer Central Luzon

KILL ARTHRITIS IN 5 MINUTES
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END EAST MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Tacloban still losing doctors, says health exec

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE delivery of medical services to more than 200,000 residents here would be hampered if city doctors continue to leave for greener pastures abroad, according to the chief doctor of this city.

Dr. Jaime Opinion, chief of the City Health Office, said two doctors left the city government service last year to work abroad.

Only seven doctors, including Opinion, are serving the city's 217,399 people, which is far from the health department's standard ratio of one doctor per 5,000 people.

"There are vacancies, yes, but there are no takers because of low salaries," Opinion said.

He declined to say how much a doctor earns working with the city government.

But he ventured that a doctor working in the country at the average would earn P350,000 annually, which is a comparatively lesser if he worked abroad.

"If you work abroad, you can earn $75,000 to $100,000 a year," he said. At a current value of 47 to a dollar, this could be translated to P950,000 to P470,000 annually.

Despite the predicament, Opinion assured they were doing their best to serve the medical needs of the city's residents.

Opinion said he had already discussed with Mayor Alfred Romualdez the lack of doctors and the mayor promised to look into solving the cadres of doctors.

He said the city government has to hire at least five new doctors.

Misamis seeks help for river flood control

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—THE CITY GOVernment has sought the help of flood control experts to avoid a repeat of the recent killer floods that hit this city and Misamis Oriental province.

Mayor Constantino Jaraula said the experts would start studies that would put in place the right flood control system next month.

"I had met with Edwin Bodabla, the man who rammed the Banco of the Mr. Pinatubo-Ebio river and had prevented damaging floods there. He told me to never go against the flow of the water to a construction, a river flood control system," Jaraula said.

Jaraula said he still has to meet with a University of the Philippines Geodetician professor and Tony Gonzaga of the Manila Observatory and Ateneo de Manila University to help the city design the flood control system in the city.

Earlier, Jaraula planned to design a flood control system by dredging and straightening a 20-meter easement, but realized that he needed to consult experts.

He wanted the river flood control system to last without repairs to cost money.

Jaraula said a flood control system is vital as the city is a catch basin while there are three major rivers and about 12 tributaries that lead to the Cagayan and Iponan rivers.

Fatalities

The swelling of the two rivers left eight persons dead and some 112,000 persons in 11 of the 80 villages displaced.

But while waiting for the experts to arrive, Jaraula temporarily lifted the suspension of all quarrying operations in the city which he ordered stopped after the first wave of flashflood on Jan. 3.

Mining operations still remain suspended.

"Quarrying operations will resume in the next few months to help us dredge the debris that made the river shallower," Jaraula said.

Jaraula said river monitoring will also be implemented, soon as the quarrying starts operating next week.

"The quarry operators vowed to plant trees once the down," he said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered the immediate reforestation in Northern Mindanao after flashfloods hit the region.

The Office of Civil Defense said the damage brought by the floods in infrastructure, agriculture and public schools in the three provinces amounted to P504 million. Kristi Conrad Alibudo, Inquirer Mindanao

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Firm pushes bid to tap river for hydroelectricity

DAVAO CITY—TURNING THE Tamugan River in Calinan District here into a multipurpose resource for water and electricity is not impossible because one only has to look at the success of other hydroelectric power plants in Luzon, an official of the Mindanao Current Harbor said on Friday.

Gregorio Jaboneilla's statement, which was made before local reporters, was apparently meant to convince the Davao City Water District (DCWD) to agree on the joint utilization of the river, one of the city's main source of water.

The DCWD's continued opposition to the Hedcor project in the river was weakened on the argument that it would affect the flow of water and decrease the supply to its distribution pipes.

But Jaboneilla, Hedcor vice president for Mindanao operations, cited the case of the Angat Hydro Power Plant in Norzagaray, Bulacan, and the Magat Hydroelectric Power Plant in Ramon, Isabela.

Multi-use

He said that while the Angat dam was able to generate power, the water supply that it has been providing to Metro Manila has not diminished.

Jaboneilla said the Angat was even providing irrigation to agricultural land in the area.

"The plant's generating capacity is 245 megawatts, bringing more supply to the Luzon power grid and bringing in 1.05 billion gallons of water to its service area," he said.

Magat, on the other hand, has a four-unit powerhouse plant, producing 360 MW of power while irrigating agricultural lands, Jaboneilla said.

"These are proofs that excavation can happen even with Hedcor and DCWD on the use of the Tamugan River," he said.

"What we are pushing is the multi-use of the river," Rene Sampollo, Hedcor president and chief operating officer, said.

No compromise

The Tamugan project, with a 27.3-MW capacity costs P3.3 billion and will beef up power supply to the city.

Sampollo said the company was hoping that the DCWD would realize that the use of the Tamugan River by both parties would bring more benefits to residents.

"They said they are not interested in coming up with a compromise agreement. Their stand is 'it's us or them, we can't co-exist.' They want us out of Tamugan," he said.

Another hearing

But DCWD sources said the utility firm was still waiting for the decision of the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) as to whether or not to allow the Hedcor project.

The sources learned that the NWRB would hold another hearing on Hedcor's application in Manila on Feb. 6. Jonathan P. Arce and Judy Quirce, *Inquirer Mindanao*

Slain hazing victim's dad seeks help of public for arrest of killers

By Felipa V. Calino
Inquirer Visayas

ROXAS CITY—THE FATHER OF 21-year-old hazing victim Jun Angelo Dalbeto, has asked the public to provide information that would lead to the arrest of the eight suspects linked to his son's death.

"I am asking the help of the public to help me find justice for my son by giving the police any information that will lead to the arrest of the suspects," Dalbeto's father Jesus said on Thursday.

Arce, a member of the Coast Guard here, said he was sad that his family had yet to attain justice for his son, almost three years after his death.

Dalbeto, an engineering student of the Capiz State University also died during a reported hazing rite on May 3, 2005. Gerard S. Reynoso, Capiz, Didoy Manalo of Panay Tabuc, Roxas City; Randi Bala of Lawigan, Roxas City; Ildefonso Machado of Maligaygay Village, Roxas City; Archie Bocaya of Sulgan Maayon, Capiz; Jerome Alcaraz of Lonoy Sapian, Capiz; and Roque Isidoro, employee of Manbisnes. He had been recommended for the suspect.

Dalbeto's father said the suspects could not be located since December 2006.

The court had delivered decision of the arrest warrant after the respondents filed a petition for review with the Department of Justice on Nov. 6, 2007.

In their petition, the respondents claimed that PO2 Teodorico Lanuza, a policeman in Manbisnes and the prime witness in the case, did not tell the truth when he testified during the preliminary investigation.

Isidoro earlier executed an affidavit as witness against the suspects but later withdrew and executed an affidavit of desistance. He said he was not present the night as executed when he made the first affidavit.

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SPONSORED BY ASEAN FOUNDATION, JAPANESEASIAN SOLIDARITY FUND & DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
CO-CHAIRED BY MARIBEL S. SINGPIN & CORAZON S. ALUNAN COMVENED BY PETTY BENITEZ-JOAQUINOT
In textile workshops throughout Southeast Asia, women weave and dye fibers using techniques that trace back to five thousand years. These tasks have become increasingly difficult to sustain as their markets begin to shrink and young people are less willing to train—stories shared not only in the Philippines, where habi (weaving) had been for millennia a way of life, but throughout Southeast Asia. Many of their challenges have been transformed into replicable successes. The forthcoming textile symposium focuses on the preservation and sustainability of weaving and dyeing and hopes to strengthen common threads that bind this region.
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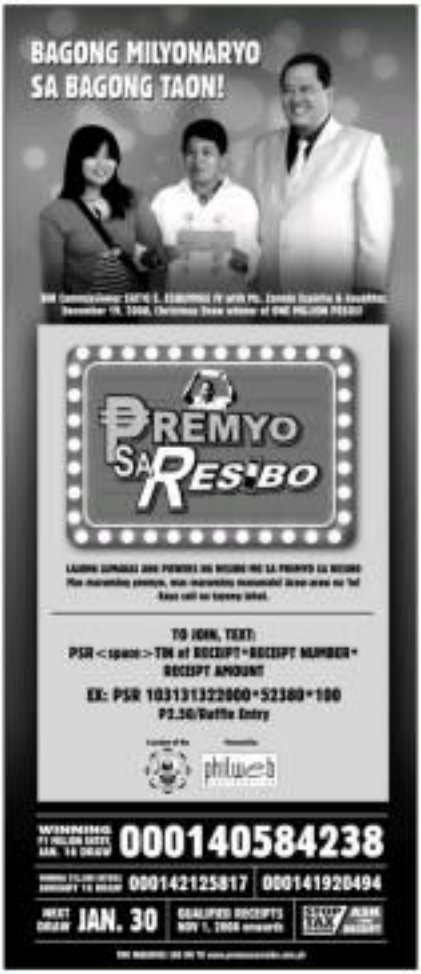

Condo units for the poor

From page A1

those who can't afford even our cheapest homes. We can't just let them stay living in slums or remain renting forever," said Bernardino Antonio, who recently persuaded a number of his colleagues to pool resources to form the Coalition for the Homeless Foundation Inc. (CHFI).

The New Town Villas Carmona in Barangay Milagrosa in Carmona, Cavite, is the CHFI's first project. Initially, a dozen condo units will be turned over to beneficiaries.

"We are currently screening 12 families and if they passed our criteria, all they have to do is move in and take care of the P2,379-worth of monthly payment to Pag-Ibig, which is payable in 30 years at 7 percent per annum," said Alvarez, who is the CHFI president.

The list of the first batch of beneficiaries will be known by February.

Initial 12 units

The CHFI took care of developing the 1,339-square-meter property into a three-storey condominium donated and of constructing the three-story building where the initial 12 units are located.

"Once completed, New Town Villas Carmona will have three buildings that will shelter 36 beneficiaries. Down payment will not be required as the CHFI already applied for its condonation with Pag-Ibig, as well as obtained a funding commitment line for the project," Alvarez said.

Each condo unit costs P310,000, and Pag-Ibig agreed to grant the same loan amount.

The 25-sq.m. unit includes a living-dining-kitchen area and a space to accommodate two small bedrooms, a toilet and a laundry area.

THE PROPOSED condominium buildings of the Coalition for the Homeless Foundation Inc. occupy 1,334 square meters of land donated by the municipal government in Carmona, Cavite

Each unit has a separate submeter for electricity and water.

Teachers, police officers

While the CHFI is targeting ant school workers, police officers, military personnel, factory workers, security guards and other poor families who could have at least P7,900 gross monthly income as they could conveniently pay the monthly dues.

Alvarez said these future condo dwellers would only have to pay the monthly amortization and a minimal amount for association dues.

"These families deserve to be helped. We decided not to debt out the condo units in order to help these beneficiaries break the cycle of dependency and become self-reliant," Alvarez said.

It is estimated that at least 26 million Filipinos—or 30 percent of the population—are living near or below the poverty line.

A family of five falls under the poverty line if it earns the peso equivalent of US$137 or P7,433.95 a month, according to the latest government statistics.

Replicate

The CHFI is negotiating with other local government units to replicate New Town Villas Carmona in their areas, according to Alvarez.

Eight luxurious lots made New Town Villas Carmona possible. Alvarez is joined by architect Jose de Guzman, Jr., Alfredo Bandoy Jr., Hijos de Dios Residences, Adobe Development Corp., B's Alcaraz Properties Development Corp., B's Shires Residence Builders Inc. and Shirasa Properties.

Those individuals and organizations are affiliated with the Subdivision Housing and Developers Association (SHDAI), the country's largest organization of subdivision and housing developers.

"These benefactors have pooled resources to raise P5.8 million, which is the cost of the whole development. Considering that the SHDA has more than 300 members, imagine more if in sharing our expertise and part of our earnings to help poor Filipinos in the Philippines," Alvarez said.

Calls, texts swamp DDB hotline

From page A1

As of Jan. 14, the center had facilitated a total of 194 queries, complaints and tips. Of the figure, 300 were received via mobile phone.

The Dial Center provides tips, rates and other concerned citizens with three easy ways to join the fight against illegal drugs: They can either call, text or chat online.

"When we receive a pressing information, we promptly forward the report to the dedicated for immediate action," Deidelo said.

Reports that the center receives are treated with utmost confidentiality and dispatched right away to law enforcement agencies for prompt action, according to DDB Chair Vicente Sotto III.

The launching of the action center came on the heels of the controversy over a drug case involving the "Alabang Boys," whose families allegedly tried to bribe narcotics agents for their release.

The three suspects are Richard Brodett, Joseph Sicaon and Jorge Joaquin.

But Sotto said in his speech at the launch that the DDB had been working on the hotline center since August last year.

"This did not come about because of the recent events. We've been planning for this since August because we want an information receptacle where drug abuse for the entire country," he said.

But the controversial case of the Alabang Boys has prompted another informant to divulge through the center other personalities involved with the three suspects, according to Noel Odulio, who keeps tabs on information sent through the mobile phone.

Words of encouragement

"Some callers would just send words of encouragement," Odulio said, showing one message expressing support for the Philippine Drugs Enforcement Agency (PDEA) that arrested the Alabang Boys.

But others ask for text loads in exchange for the information they give to the center, she added.

The Dial Center also accepts queries on rehabilitation application, psychiatric intervention and counseling, which can be conveyed via the telephone, the mobile phone or, for more voluminous information, the Internet and e-mail messaging.

A worried wife recently called the center for guidance on how she would be able to commit her vanishing husband to a rehabilitation center, according to Deidelo.

"We informed her of the proper procedure for that and of the people to her family whom she could ask for help," she said.

"But in some cases, we ask our resident counselors and doctors to talk to the callers," she added.

Three shifts

Three select officers are tasked with answering phone queries, while two personnel monitor incoming messages in three shifts from Monday to Sunday.

The center is composed of 12 people designated as either operations manager, administration administrative action officers, help desk professionals or technical administrators.

The Dial Center can be reached through hotline Tel. No. 02-9290465, Cell Phone Nos. 0928-5028911/02 and 0917-5038222; or chat account md@pdeaphilippines@yahoo.com.

The center, which is inside the HDF-PDEA building in Quezon City, is open to those who want to friendly go the extra mile.

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Bridging gap

The DDB chair said information could help mobilize more people in the fight against illegal drugs.

"Through Dial, we are also bridging the gap that once held concerned citizens and people in need of help from the services geared toward curing resistant society," he said.

Sotto said the creation of the hotline was inspired as the public remained largely unaware of the means to prevent drug abuse and ignorance of their roles in the fight for a drug-free country.

The Dial Center has five major functions under its public—legal assistance (which includes rehabilitation application, regulatory control exemption and evaluation of drug cases), counseling, research, training on government existing programs, and referral.

Under the referral service, law enforcement illegal drug activities will immediately be forwarded to the PDEA and other drug law enforcement agencies. Drug users may also be guided to places where they could get rehabilitation or psychiatric interventions.

The Provincial Government of Albay through its program office for education called EQUAL or Education Quality for Albayanos, in partnership with the Bicol University, Department of Education and the Jaycees International - Legazpi, announces the

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BERNEY B. MENDOZA
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BERNELLE P. SARPAL
(Polangui General Comprehensive High School, Albay Division)
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MARIBELLE B. LITA
(Bagumbayan Central School, Legazpi City Division)
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TOMASA O. CARE
(Tabaco National High School, Tabaco City Division)
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Stage 2: Dr. Nelia S. Ciocson, former Vice-President for Academic Affairs of Bicol University, Legazpi City; **Dr. Peter Bernaldes**, former Dean, Graduate School of Aquinas University, Legazpi City; **Dr. Teresita Diaz-Naz**, former Regional Director, Department of Education ROV, Legazpi City, and **Dr. Violeta Diaz**, former Dean, College of Education, Bicol University, Legazpi City.

Stage 3: Dr. Nelia S. Ciocson; **Dr. Peter Bernaldes**; **Atty. Lilia Garcia**, former President, Philippine Normal University; **Dr. Olivia de Leon**, President, Rizal University, and **Dr. Hipolito Paleon**, Dean, Graduate School, Director Research and Development of the Philippine Women's University in Manila.

Awards and Prizes Received

The Ten Outstanding Teachers received the following: a certificate, medal, trophy and P100,000.00 each.

LIGAYA L. PALCON, Ed.D.
EQUAL Coordinator

GOV. JOEY SARTE SALCEDA
EQUAL Chairman

(This paid advertisement is in recognition of the performers who have been striving hard for the progress of Albay through education.)

RP eyes Obama

4 kidnap victims 'monitored' in Indanan village

By Julie S. Alipala and Ed General
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—GUNMEN HAVE TAKEN three kidnapped Red Cross workers together with the son of a Chinese businessman abducted earlier in a known stronghold of Abu Sayyaf bandits on Jolo Island, a Muslim militant leader said yesterday.

Octavio Dinampo, a professor at Mindanao State University, said his sources in the separatist Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) had told him that the four kidnapped victims had been "monitored" to be in the village of Kiling Dalang in Indanan.

The three members of the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)—Swiss national Andreas Notter, Italian Eugenio Vagni and Filipino Mary Jean Lacaba—were kidnapped in the provincial capital in Jolo town on Jan. 15.

Dinampo said his informants had told him that the three were seen with Tilli Wu, son of a Chinese trader, who was kidnapped last Dec. 14.

He said that Abu Sayyaf gunmen, identified as Usahin Jundali, alias Doctor Abu, and brothers Gafar and Albader Parad, were holding the four hostages in Indanan.

But Padzhar Abdulla, a spokesperson of the multilateral Task Force ICRC, could not confirm the reports that the victims themselves were kidnapped last year while accompanying a group of journalists in Jolo.

Abdulla said he had reports of sightings in Talipao, also on Jolo, of the ICRC personnel but that these were still being verified.

Swiss humanitarian organization have called for the unconditional release of the ICRC workers.

Protecting the Civil Society Initiatives for International Humanitarian Law and its efforts groups issued a joint statement appealing "to the lawless armed and communities of their captors" to release their victims.

Journalists covering the kidnapping of the three ICRC workers have been given security escorts by the military, who also exercised their constraints to prevent a repetition of the abduction of a TV crew last year.

Maj. Gen. Juancho Sabban, commander of the military's Joint Task Force Comet, on Friday said the escorts would ensure the safety of the journalists, who were confined to the Marine barracks.

Basilan kidnapping

On Basilan Island across the channel from Zamboanga, Brig. Gen. Ruperto Cimerom, commander of the First Marine Brigade, yesterday said that he had dispatched troops to Tabuan, Sumisip and Tipo-Tipo towns to go after the kidnappers of three high school teachers.

Preston Dalawis, Janet de Jesus Bayot and Rafael Bitanyada were kidnapped on Friday while on their way aboard a boat to Zamboanga from the island barangay of Lunding Ipan. Their abductors were reported to have demanded P2 million for the release of each of the victims.

The kidnapping has forced the suspension of classes in Lamitang Chor high school where the victims were teaching, according to barangay officials.

Barangay Chair Musa Sahidamin urged the kidnappers to free the teachers.

"They are like us trying to survive. They even sacrificed their families to help our Muslim children to have better education," he said, adding that residents were supporting the teachers with their needs. "So why demand ransom?"

FOOT PATROL Marine soldiers scour the hinterland of Jolo town in Sulu in search of the three Red Cross volunteers who were kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf. (STAR/ALLEN)

Transcribe the remaining text in the same reading order.

Peña expressed confidence "that there will be no renewals" next among [Filipino] health workers because [the United States] needs them."

Improving health care along with expanding renewable energy is among the initiatives that Obama is pushing as he seeks to build public support for an $825-billion economic recovery plan.

In his weekly radio address on Saturday, he pledged to use the fund to create jobs.

Saying more people filed for unemployment last week than at any time in the past 26 years, Obama warned joblessness could hit double digits and the economy could fall $1 trillion short of its full capacity if nothing was done.

Obama said the economic recovery plan would save or create 3 million to 4 million jobs while investing in clean energy development, education and improving health-care efficiency.

Jobs lost daily

In the Philippines, hundreds of workers are losing their jobs daily, mostly in the electronics industry, which has suffered from plunging global demand, according to the labor department.

Last week, 85-ship maker Uson Corp. announced it would close down a testing plant in Cavite with 1,800 workers.

Labor Secretary Marianito Roque said some 60,000 Filipinos would lose their jobs this year, mainly in the electronics and garments industries.

Alarmed by further job cuts due to the deepening global recession, several workers' groups, including the Partido ng Manggagawa and the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), called for a tripartite labor conference to discuss bailout and rescue plans to ensure job security, protect wages and create more jobs for those unemployed.

"Now is not the time for government to act to minimize from its commitments. We need the kind of consultative and open environment prevailing in the United States to draw the best ideas from our citizens," said Renato Magtubo, president of the Ople Labor Policy Center.

Ople and a group of experts also wanted a summit to tackle the situation of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

Ankar, Samsung, Fujitsu

In the Philippines, employers in at least 60 large companies, mostly in special economic zones, are "extremely vulnerable to layoffs" due to the collapse of the semiconductors and electronics export markets, according to the TUCP.

By the first half of this year, about 40,000 workers could lose their jobs in the Calabarzon region, according to the Pagkakaisa ng Manggagawa sa Timog Katagalugan (Pamantik).

Pamantik chairman Ruben Legaspi said another 2,000 regular workers in Ankar Technology Inc. would be laid off by February. Also facing layoffs are workers in Samsung, Yazaki, P-Tech, Fujitsu, MIC, TDK and Matsushita.

Legaspi said that in Laguna, Integrated Microelectronics Inc. (IMI), which previously employed 17,000 workers, mostly women, laid off 5,000 contractual workers last month. The company also implemented forced leaves for more than 1,000 regular workers.

Toyota, Nissan and Ford

Starting January, Toyota Motor Philippines implemented a Monday-to-production day and it would "temporarily" get rid of its 500 contractuals and 60-to-65 workers by March.

Nissan introduced 40 regular last December and would let go of 70 more workers on February. Isuzu Philippines plans to implement a four-day work month this February.

Ford now maintains only 16 employees out of the previously 400 workforce. Isuzu Philippines will cut 150 of its 1,000 workforce. Another company, which employed 30,000 Japanese employees.

The Sinodiam ng Manggagawa sa Calabarzon confirmed the layoffs in Ankar, IMI as well as in Laguna Electronics Inc., Rasti Caucayan of the labor group said some 15,000 workers of IMI Cabuyao, Ankar and Sanyo were laid off in December last year.

"The early holiday break was supposedly due to less volume of work resulting from the global crisis. The workers were asked to return to the factory last Jan. 6 but instead of going back to their jobs, they were told to wait for the next order," Caucayan said.

"The workers were informed that if orders do not pick up by Jan. 19 then workers will be permanently terminated," Caucayan said.

The Partido ng Manggagawa chapter in Cabuyao monitoring the labor dispute at Glaxellmi Inds., one of the biggest furniture exporting firms in the country after the union filed a notice of strike following looming retrenchment and work rotation. The management reportedly shut down the company on Jan. 5.

Lifting ban on Iraq

Aside from the United States, the Obama is exploring the Canadian and Australian labor markets as possible destinations of Filipino workers, according to Dimaculangan.

The Philippines is also broadening lifting the ban on sending Filipino workers to Iraq. Hot President Arroyo Cuneta said yesterday that the lifting of the ban would come as soon as the safety of workers in Iraq were guaranteed.

Dimaculangan of the Philippine government was expressing the concern interchanges of OFWs as companies and industries worldwide deal with the economic crisis.

Malaysia's decision to ban foreign workers and threats of further layoffs in Mexico and Taiwan where many Filipinos work added to the bad news on the labor front.

Reuters said Taiwan's recent records showed that 4,042 OFWs were retrenched as a result of the global economic slowdown. Most of the workers came from Taiwan, Australia and the Czech Republic.

She said a global mapping done by the Department of Labor and Employment showed that about 5,000 OFWs have returned since this month. With a report from Reuters

Mangyan, Aeta folk write own storybooks

From page A1

the great American era did not realize then that it widened, rather than narrowed, the gap between the aboriginal Filipinos and the rest in society.

And as they matured in order their own book, tell their own story, Pepito Cariquitan, an Alangan-Mangyan, did just that. So did the Aeta elders of Quezon and the Alangan-Mangyan elders of Mindoro.

Three storybooks for children, told, written and illustrated by the Mangyan and Aeta themselves, have been published by the Panulaan Center for Indigenous People's Literature in partnership with indigenous-community schools.

The stories are in three languages—the language of the storyteller, Filipino and English—all running simultaneously on the same pages. There books are the first in the Kwentong Katutubo (indigenous-peoples' stories) Series.

Scheming settlers

Short and easy to read, the books are not just for grade schoolers. Even adults will pick up lessons from them. The illustrations, done by the Mangyan and Aeta themselves, are big, unsophisticated and colorful.

"Uyo, Kanyon Susy" (The Land is Our Life) is about how the Mangyan lost to scheming settlers the land and resources that God, whom they call Ibagan, entrusted to them. It also tells about how they are working hard to claim what is rightfully theirs.

The book was written by Alangan-Mangyan Ms. Delores Andoloy, Lipayo Lumanyuan and Resurreccion Sumoan. The illustrator, Juan Anthony Gallicia, is a Mangyan.

"Si Agpaki-ugpagan Pepito" (The Journey of Pepito) is Pepito Cariquitan's personal story about how he emerged from the Mangyan hill-camps, was driven into a school fraternity and all kinds of vices and became alienated from his community. It also tells about how he returned to the fold via the Tagbanua Center for Learning and Development.

But he also reveals his inestimable. Could be not himself assuring Datingin urged? Would he be able to learn the Mangyan ways again?

Blood of God

"Inkaya na Lima a Dinam" (The Legend of the Five Rivers) deals with a story told by the Aetas elders of Quezon. Some 8,000 Tabon (the god Tabon) saved them from the drought by carving his veins and letting his blood flow to become the five rivers. Aruk, Mangkal, Ngilaan, Dalvahn and Dilmahan.

It was written by Carlos Bundoc, an artist and illustrated by Ariel Sanchez, David Panadero, Chuck Saval and Roger Pentinio. Panadero also did the illustrations for "The Journey of Pepito."

But this book is not the Aeta people's first.

In 2002, the Aeta of Zambales, with the help of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary published a collectible book ("Emperor and Empress") on their experiences of the Mount Pinatubo eruption.

As the story goes, Tabon commanded the Aeta's ancestors: "As long as you stay in this area's very mountains by my blood, you will never go hungry. Protect it and it will be yours for generations."

Without land or livelihood

Alas, as in the case of many ancestral domains of indigenous peoples (IP) in the Philippines and all over the world, huge profit-making ventures have encroached upon their lands, driving them to the edge, rendering them landless and without means of livelihood.

The books also provide concrete and background information on the indigenous peoples. The Aeta of Quezon belong to the Negrito ethnolinguistic group found in Southeast Asia, most of whom were hunter-gatherers.

There are 33 known Negrito languages, one of which is the Kapi language spoken by the Aeta people in Quezon, Aurora and Quirino.

According to Panulaan, the Aeta are the original possessors of the Sierra Madre mountain range of Nueva Ecija—one which the Aeta refer to as Embrace. They were the original and sole inhabitants for thousands of years before non-Negrito people migrated to the Philippines 3,000 years ago.

The Alangan are among the seven Mangyan tribes of the island of Mindoro—Alangan, Batangan, Bubid, Iraya, Iraymanic, Buangnon and Tadyawan. Altogether, the Mangyan people number some 63,000, but each tribe has its own language, culture and traditions.

Mangyan syllabary and way of writing has not been mastered correct and efforts are being done to popularize it among students.

Next generation

Anthropologist Benjamin Madrinan, 45, founder of the Ilaraw-based Panulaan and president of Anitel Foundation, said there would be more in the series.

Panulaan, the first of its kind in the Philippines, is a refuge for indigenous peoples from all over the country (Ibaliwa, 2004 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Emergent Leadership, along with the Holy Spirit Sisters, helped the Alangan Mangyan establish Tagalaan in 1980).

The Anitel Foundation, through its Panampalin program in Quirino, aims to strengthen the Aeta people's organizational capabilities so that they, especially those affected by Typhoon "Pareng" in 2006, could have better access to education, food, money and alternative sources of livelihood.

"We hope the book series would help portray the various realities and challenges faced by the IP Mindanao says.

"Through these books, we hope the wisdom, knowledge and practices of the IP could be documented and promoted for the coming generation, so that they would be valued, not just for the IP but by the rest of society as well."

'Read-Along' tackles bravery, hard work

From page A1

mind me to read to him once in a while. It has become a habit," she added.

Despite her busy schedule hosting ABS-CBN's Sports Unlimited, the morning mayor's sporting events, Cuenllejo said she still found time to relish the stories read.

"If I travel, I also resort to audio books. I am into fitness and health, Christian books and autobiographies," she said.

And this includes spending precious moments turning pages with her son regularly. "I would get stories mainly from the Children's Bible Stories. He likes stories a lot. I also get to read to his cousins at times," she said.

Her wonder, despite being spoken for the narrative that day, Cuenllejo was in her usual energetic self during the session, keeping the little gland to the story and occasionally asking them questions.

'X-ibit'

"I really had a fun time! I was energized by the experience because it's different when you are happy kids. You appreciate real joy," Cuenllejo said.

"They were really listening and they know the answers to my questions. We should not underestimate their understanding. It's really good to read to them and make them learn."

Janie read "Xibit" by Angie Rivera, a story about a boy who, through hard work, overcomes his difficulties in reading.

She also narrated another story, "Wellang's Wiggle," about a tadpole who learns to accept things as he turns into a frog. The story was written by Brigid Rambio-Abad.

"Xibit" and "Wellang's" are both published by Adarna and then questions.

GUEST READER Award-winning Adarna storyteller Ebet Jusay reads along with a child. (STAR/ALLEN)

Illustrated by Beth Parrocha Docdocdoc.

Jusay selected some children—among them her daughter Lourdan—to read along with her. The session was often broken by the children's laughter, thanks to Jusay's storytelling antics.

Family affair

Danny Cabe, who attended Saturday's session with his wife Marissa and their 6-year-old daughter Dana, said it was their first time to attend such programs.

"We learned about it through the newspaper and thought it was a good opportunity for our daughter. She is a voracious reader and we were convinced that the read-along would inspire her to continue her reading habits," Danny said.

"It was very interesting. The readers were very good, very expressive. We would definitely come back," Marissa added.

Dana, who likes science books like those authored by Dr. Luis Gonzalez, said she particularly enjoyed "Wellang's Wiggle."

"I loved the transformation of the tadpole to a frog. It was exciting and the reader was funny," the girl said.

57th session

The session was hosted by Inquirer Inquirer writer Ruth Navarro, who kicked off the read-along with the prayer titled "Where I'm scared," from the book "Hello God 2 (Children's prayers for every mood)" by Grace E. Chang.

The session was held in cooperation with Krispy Kreme, Strada On Manila, Veluxe Bookstore and ABS-CBN.

It was also the 50th Inquirer Read-along since the project was launched in May 2007 by the newspaper's Research Department, Library and Inquirer Inquirer.

The project received an award of excellence last November from the prestigious Philippine Quill, an honor given by the International Association of Business Communicators.

The next read-along session will be held on Feb. 14 at the Rockwell office in Makati City. Interested parents may contact Ellen Esguerra at (632) 896-6000 loc. 361, 897-0000, local 320.

Slots are open on a first-come, first-served basis.

(Lawrence de Guzman and Rubaiat Qwodaila, Inquirer Research)

Texters, Aces forge . . .

Frompage A24

By Musong R. Carillo

CHOT REYES MADE TWO CORRECT CALLS FOR Talk 'N Text—the first some exactly a year ago, and the other just before tip-off last night.

The Tropang Texters threw a 17-point lead but played their hearts out in overtime to pound out a 118-113 victory over San Miguel's hard-fighting Beermen in Mind Talk 'N Text to the PBA-BDO Philippine Cup title contest against Alaska.

The Alaska ace clinched the other finals slot by storming out the Sta. Lucia Realtors, 87-83, in the second game.

The TNT win made a prophet of Reyes, who promised team owner Mommy V Pangilinan on Jan. 25, 2008 during their initial talk about the possibility of rounding Talk 'N Text, dust he would take the team to the Finals in year's time.

But he needed a pep talk just before the game when he emphasized that only a big fighting heart would take the Texters to the championship series.

"By some sheer twist of providence, what I told them [the TNT management] exactly one year ago came true," Reyes, never at a loss for words, told scribes. "I also told the players that the only way we can win [the series] was with heart.

"We missed shots [in overtime] and got the rebounds, fine, in my mind, ours all heart on our part," said Reyes after his Texters closed out San Miguel, 4-2, in a series that could have easily passed as the Finals.

There were also some great shootings in the game with Ato Agustin and mechanic Mac Cardona leading the way and a host of others stepping up when it counted most.

Cardona, booed the whole series long by San Miguel fans, came away with a night-high 34 points built around seven triples, the last coming at the 1:14 mark for what turned out to be the final tally.

The decision also by a player who has not really gotten the respect he deserves came before San Miguel wasted some golden opportunities to forge a series decider.

Jay Washington, the former Talk 'N Text forward, hit a triple with 28.4 seconds left to forge extension at 111 and then nailed a fallout top of a Jason Villanueva miss with 1:57 left in overtime to give the Beermen the lead for the last time, 110-113.

But the 6-foot-7 hanger muffed a wide open shot and in the last San Miguel offensive and Talk 'N Text missed the chance to run out the clock on the other end by grabbing at least three crucial rebounds, all of them by Jimmy Cuntay.

Cuntay's 22-rebound night helped snuff the fight out of the Beermen, who came all the way from the wild card phase and nearly forged a Game 7 after trailing, 64-77, in the third period.

Jimmy Mayag, who finished with 27 points, five rebounds and nine assists, gave the Texters that commanding lead from 66-54after drawing three straight steps.

But Miguel fought back and even took a 106-103 lead inside the final two minutes of regulation after

Marc Pingris split his free throws off Cuntay.

Ilisty Seigle led the Beermen with 32 points, but he more scoreless from the 2:34 mark of the fourth after giving Sam Miguel a 103-

103 lead by beating the shot clock with a triple.

The Texters then advanced to the best-of-seven title series opposite the winner of the Alaska-Sta. Lucia semifinal duel going on at press time with the loser trying to close out the Realtors.

"Tim Cone (Alaska coach) is a dear friend, but I hope it (other series) goes a Game 7 so we can rest," Reyes said. "Hopefully, we can have the same luxury in the Finals."

The scores:

First Game:

TALK 'N TEXT

116—Jarbeja 34, Asaytono 27, Dillinger 14, De Ocampo 11, Fonti 9, Abando 7, Castro 5, Alparas 4, Cuntay 4, Dupaul, Jacob

SAN MIGUEL

113—Seigle 32, Blankenship 18, Pingris 16, Ennis 14, Villanueva 9, Ildefonso 8, Tagaloa 6, Reavis 5, Cabagnot 5, Pascual 3, Cruz 3, Fonteras 2, Hontiveros 0.

Quarters: 20-20, 47-45, 69-69, 93-93, 116-113

DUEL IN THE PAINT. Talk 'N Text's Harvey Carey (right) and San Miguel's Danny Seigle battle for the ball during the Tropang Texters' 118-113 overtime win in Game 6 of their PBA-BDO Philippine Cup title series. INQUIRER PHOTO BY GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

Tight five-way race for PBL best player

By Jasmine W. Payo

A PAIR OF ROOKIES FROM TWO overwhelming teams and three veterans emerged as the frontrunners in the race for Best Player of the Conference award in the PBL-PCI Fleet Lieutenant Cup.

After leading their teams to surprising runs in the playoffs, guards Paul Lee of Bamboo and Chris Ross of Pharex made it to the top five along with seasoned standouts Jerry Cruz of Hapee TeaOpinion, Haihance Cesario's Slice Matsuhashi and Magnolia Purewater's Neil Robinson.

Relatively unproven here to make a quick impact in the league, but the 6-foot Lee consistently delivered big numbers that propelled the Energy Boosters to their first Final Four stint.

CHASE Ross

"He's a veteran in the game of a rookie," said Bamboo coach Lawrence Chongson. "He's one of the best players right now."

Lee, a backup guard for University of the East, finally flashed his real talent to lead all scorers at 16.4 points per game on top of 7.1 rebounds, 2.8 assists and a third best 1.8 steals in 33 games.

Ross, the cop rookie draft pick from Marshall University in Texas, shone only in all-around game that filled the Gunrats from the brink of eliminations in the quarterfinals.

Tough games bring out the best players and Ross stood out," said Pharex coach Carlo Tan.

The 6-foot-1 Ross was top in assists at 8.9 apg and steals at 3 spg and also averaged 11.6 points and 6.1 boards.

Cruz had most double-double averages of 14.2 points, 9.6 rebounds and 1.8 assists that helped the Complete Protectors earn a semifinals in the semifinals.

Matsuhashi averages 12.3 points, 9.2 boards and a second best 1.6 blocks while Robinson rounded up the conference's top five with 14.1 points, 6.5 rebounds, 2.5 assists.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

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Assist. Secretary	Department of Agrarian Reform	Jesus Quintos	Department of Agrarian Reform
Assist. Secretary	Department of Agrarian Reform	Rolando Tungpalan	Department of Agrarian Reform
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SPORTS

Texters, Aces forge Finals showdown

TEXTERS, A27

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DID YOU KNOW

MALATI Church, which was built by Augustinians in 1588, was one of the structures occupied by British forces when they attacked Manila in 1762. The British's stay lasted only until 1764. In 1863, Malate Church was greatly damaged by an earthquake. It was rebuilt, only to be damaged again during World War II. It was restored after the war.
Cyril C. Bonoan, Inquirer Research

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MMDA to videotape errant drivers

CCTV cameras on Edsa to monitor reckless motorists 24/7

By Allison W. Lopez

FROM NOW ON, MOTORISTS on Edsa should be on their best driving behavior seven days a week, 24 hours a day—with or without a traffic enforcer in sight.

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando announced yesterday that the agency has started using its closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras—placed in strategic areas on the 24-kilometer thoroughfare—to go after drivers who violate traffic rules.

During the radio program "MMDA sa DMX" on dzBB, Fernando said the move was in line with the agency's "no physical contact policy."

The use of CCTV cameras to apprehending errant drivers was implemented on Wednesday night after it was approved by the Metro Manila Council, the MMDA's policy-making body, he added.

The program will be implemented during a trial period of three months.

According to Fernando, violators who are caught on tape would receive a notice from the MMDA containing the following: The time, date and place where the alleged traffic violation was committed, the corresponding fine and a still photo taken from the video.

He said drivers possessing their apprehension may file an appeal within 7[illegible] at the Traffic Adjudication Board, which should act on the matter[illegible].

Those who want to pay their fine, however, may go to the nearest Metrobank branch within seven days upon receiving the notice.

On the other hand, drivers who ignore the notice from the MMDA will receive a second one. Should they still fail to pay their fine, their names will be placed on the alarm list of the Land Transportation Office, barring them from renewing their license or the registration of their vehicles.

The MMDA has installed about 53 wireless cameras on Edsa, Commonwealth Avenue, C5 Road and other major thoroughfares as part of its expanded Bus Rapid Transit program.

3 suspected thieves killed in QC shootout

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THREE SUSPECTED MOTORcycle thieves were killed in yet another shootout with police operatives on Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City at dawn yesterday.

Senior Insp. Angelo Nicolas, head of the Quezon City Police District's anti-theft unit, said the three have yet to be identified.

Nicolas said the three figured in a shootout with his men and members of the QCPD Station 6 led by their chief, Supt. Rolando Nana.

According to him, the three took as companion the motorcycle of Mark de Manuel near Tom memorial's Heights on Commonwealth Avenue at around 3:45 a.m. yesterday.

Nicolas said the shootout was witnessed by De Manuel who later positively identified the three took as the ones who took his motorcycle.

According to the police official, the suspected thieves were spotted by his men on board the stolen motorcycle (plate number TH71 889) at around 4:40 a.m. near Tandang Sora corner Commonwealth Avenue.

However, upon seeing the policemen, the three men drove toward Batasan.

Upon reaching the Batasan Overbridge on Commonwealth Avenue, Nicolas said one of the three were alighted from the motorcycle.

The theft suspect hid behind a post and then fired upon the oncoming police cars, he added.

However, when the police fired back, he fell down dead.

His two companions, on the other hand, continued to drive away while firing their guns to another team of policemen chasing them.

The two, however, were also hit and died on the spot.

Recovered from the three (sic) were a .357 caliber firearm, two caliber .38 revolvers, 12 empty shells, five unused bullets and the stolen motorcycle.

Nicolas, when asked why the police seemed to have advice the thieves were headed, said that they have put in place a procedure which is immediately activated whenever there is a crime in person.

Part of the procedure, he explained, is mapping out the possible escape routes of the suspects and blocking all of them.

"The police have drawn up a method for pushing escaping suspects into an area where they could be trapped," Nicolas said.

Earlier this month, the police official and his men killed in a shootout two car theft suspects.

The four were turned out to be members of a notorious kidnap for ransom gang.

Citizen's call

An appeal to Pasig City officials

ATTENTION, Pasig City engineering department. You might want to remove the steel barriers (or adjust the height) that have been placed on the U-turn slot on E. Rodriguez Jr. or C5 Road. These barriers block the view of drivers making a U-turn so they can't see the oncoming cars on the other lane. Nuong siya na ng pagbagan ang at ordinary sa kalye. Ayan ang dahilan ng aag may yellow sa ibaba at dinaan ang mga ito sa U-turn. Hindi ba nakakasakit ang isang yaya sa kotse kasama ang mga alaga sa streets of Metro Manila. Don't contribute to more accidents on the road. That is the difficulty with too many government officials having police escorts and drivers. They themselves don't experience how risky it is to drive on the streets of Metro Manila.)

JUANCHO, EAST, 41, Cainta, Rizal

Praise for MMDA

KUDOS to the MMDA for clearing the Lambingan-Nicanor St. Cruz Streets in Sampaloc, Manila, of illegal vendors and other obstructions. That area was turned into a market. Pedestrians and vehicles competed for space because the sidewalks were impassable. I hope the MMDA will next worked Tayuman-Bustillos and Quezon Blvd. going to Galas, Quezon City, also in Sampaloc. Vendors and establishments have taken over the sidewalks in these areas.

ALEX, INSIDE
Antonio St., Sampaloc, Manila

Ugly street in Marikina

RESIDENTS of La Mirage na Village in Marikina Heights, were left with an ugly street after Manila Water had dug up the place. Manila Water co but left its rehabilitation to the local government. (Mabilang nasira ng mga ganyan sa pagawa ng tubig. Di sana nila hayaan ang mga ganyan sa kalye.)

JAIRO MARQUEZ, 32, Marikina City

Clarification from QCPD

THIS is in response to a text message sent by Tony C., 53, of Tandang Sora, Quezon City, to Metro Citizen's Call which came out on Dec. 22 last year. A check conducted by the Quezon City Traffic Enforcement Unit under Traffic Sector 9 showed that the passage which used to park on Commonwealth Avenue and was occupy a spot at Tandang Sora near Commonwealth Avenue have been given a permit to operate a jeepney, tricycle terminal. The permit came from Barangay Culiat and the Department of Public Order and Safety. Furthermore, the drivers and operators of the terminal were asked to strictly abide by the provisions and specific conditions stated in the permit, particularly those on proper parking. Thank you and rest assured of our prompt action on matters of mutual concern.

JENNIFER ALEXY CERVANTES, 0920-6212-824
Public Information Office Unit
Quezon City Police District

Numerous street obstructions

THERE'S a leaking water pipe, vendors parked illegally and sidewalk vendors in front of the PNTC and NLRC Buildings on Banawe Street in Quezon City. These are causing a lot of inconvenience to passersby, especially to the people with disabilities who are going to the Philippine Orthopedic Hospital. Please help us.

ISTINA, 50-SOMETHING, 60, Angono, Rizal

LET THERE BE LIGHT
Anna Cristina Pesilabban, a resident of Manila, writes: "To MMDA Chairman Bayani Fernando, General Manager Robert Nazareno and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay: I cannot help but notice the pitch-black portion at night of Edsa from the corner of Gil Puyat to Ayala Avenue and the unlighted flyover connecting Gil Puyat Avenue to Kalayaan Avenue and The Fort. These dark areas are right smack in the Central Business District of Makati! Why are all the lampposts on the seven-lane-and-flyover not functioning? Are you waiting for road accidents and casualties before you act on this matter?"

Cops still facing blank wall in teenagers' deaths

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE death of a 14-year-old girl further deepened yesterday as the only persons who could have shed light on how she died also turned up dead in Makati City.

The body of John Kenneth Salcedo, 15, the boyfriend of Sarah Ang, was found floating in the Pasig River on Thursday night, hours after Ang's corpse was discovered.

It took several hours, however, before his body was identified by his relatives.

Both Salcedo and Ang were students of Makati High School.

Their case has baffled homicide investigators of the Manila Police District who have run out of theories on how the two teenagers died.

PO1 Gerry Serrano, case investigator, said they were still trying to determine whether there was foul play involved in the incident.

It was also possible, he added, that the victims accidentally fell into the water and drowned.

Ang, a resident of Barangay Carmona, Makati City, was last seen on Tuesday night, after she told her father that she was meeting Salcedo.

According to the girl's father, Ang had just arrived from school when she asked for his permission to go out.

Her body was found on Thursday morning floating in the river, near the Cinema Bath Black Coop, at 245 Delfinay St. in Barangay Pinagkaisa, Makati.

The victim was described as a man between 30 and 35 years old and around 5'11" in height.

It later turned out that the body was that of Salcedo who was identified by his relatives from Caloocan City.

Investigators added that Salcedo's body did not have any signs of external injuries inflicted Ang's.

When her body was found, the girl had stab on the left knee, over the left eye and on the chin.

Investigators said they were looking for other possible witnesses who could help them solve the case.

"It could be anything from a suicide pact to their being victimized by robbers, to an accident. We are still not sure what happened to these teenagers," he added.

MetroBriefs

Man, 2 sons kill vendor

A fruit vendor was stabbed dead by two brothers and their father early yesterday morning in Marikina City after a drunken argument, the police said. Rommel Sachet, 28, of Purok Singko, Barangay Malanday, died at the Amang Rodriguez Memorial Medical Center after he was stabbed in the stomach, said investigator PO2 Noel Bravador said. Sachet was drinking outside his house with neighbors Camilo Pagaran, 46, and Rogelio's sons Jeffrey, 21, and Jordan, 22, when they got into an argument, Bravador said. "Camilo and Jordan held him down and then Jeffrey stabbed him with a knife," the investigator said. Sachet was rushed by a neighbor to the hospital but he died while undergoing surgery, he said. The father Pagaran and sons were arrested by the police but Jeffrey remained at large. He will be held on drugs, Bravador said, adding that the three would face murder charges.

EJ Par

5 hurt in shooting incident

FIVE people were wounded after a man went into a shooting rampage in an all-night betting station in Pasay City early on Saturday, police said. Members of the Pasay police were looking for the gunman who was identified as Mark San Jose. Investigators said Arnulfo Cantuero, 65; Joel Gagnotes, 34; Ernesto Rivera, 61; Jose Cardenia, 52; and Elias dela Rosa, 72, were drinking beer inside the OTB station on Cabrera Street when San Juan shot them with a caliber .45 pistol without any provocation. San Juan then escaped as bystanders took the five men to a hospital.

Mike Morales

Vendor shot dead

A BALUT vendor was killed inside his house on Saturday evening, Samuel Alix, 37, of Block 9 Sitaara Compound in Post Area, Manila, died instantly from a gunshot wound in the head. The shooter, who has yet to be identified, escaped. PO3 Jonathan Bautista of the Manila Police District homicide section said the shooting incident occurred between 8 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. on Saturday. The victim's sister who lived next door said she heard three gunshots. When she rushed to her brother's house, she saw him lying dead on the ground.

Jeannette I. Andrade

AUSTRALIA DAY: Celebrating all that is great about the land Down Under

IT'S A DAY TO CELEBRATE IN TRUE Aussie style.

That's because today marks Australia Day — the country's official national day, observed annually on this date.

Australians the world over celebrate the event with activities that spread far and wide—on the beaches, in the backyards, in the city and in the parks.

The day commemorates the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, marking the country's start of British colonization. Australia Day is an official public holiday in every state and territory of Australia.

Records of the celebration of Australia Day date back to 1808. Yearly, millions of Australians participate in various activities across the country. In 2004, an estimated 7.3 million people attended Australia Day celebrations and functions nationwide.

"Australia Day is a celebration of all that is great about Australia and being Australian and the 2009 line up [of activities] will reflect the diverse country that is Australia," Warren Hanson, Chief Executive Officer of the National Australia Day Council, said in a statement.

The National Australia Day Council (NADC) today called on Australians to learn more about the diverse cultures, particularly Indigenous cultures, in the country.

At a special sunrise gathering in Cooktown, Far North Queensland last week, NADC chair Adam Gilchrist, said Australia Day was the ideal time for people to consider what it is they are celebrating as a nation. He urged them to look back and consider their past, recognize the challenges they still face, and to make a commitment to build an even better future.

"Our diversity and the way we live in harmony together is something to be very proud of, but it's also something we all need to continue working hard at in our everyday lives," Gilchrist said.

Australia Day will continue to evolve in an inclusive and respectful way, in all Australians build their understanding of different perspectives on identity and culture, Hanson said.

"Every year, Australia Day becomes a broader and more diverse celebration of what's great about Australia and being Australian—remembering our past, celebrating our present and looking to our future."

Today, an impressive roster of activities awaits Aussies in Down Under. There are live concerts; a music and comedy debate; display of vintage, classic cars; skiping and boating in parties; and a fleet of double-decker buses crossing Sydney as part of the celebrations, among many others.

Kenneth M. del Rosario

IT'S a busy day for Sydney as it holds meaningful activities celebrating Australia Day.

Get into the spirit of Australia Day with these ideas

AUSTRALIA DAY IS MORE than a public holiday — it's the day Aussies come together as a nation to celebrate Australia and being Australian.

The biggest nationwide public holiday in the country, there are no hard and fast rules on how to celebrate the day but it is great if you feel like partying, as by any year in sun.

There are many ways to celebrate Australia Day and all of them are good — from attending organized community events to marking the occasion in your own simple way. Probably the main "rule," if there are any, is to go out and enjoy the occasion with fellow countrymen.

While the whole Australia is busy today with its various activities, there is no reason why Aussies in the Philippines cannot celebrate with them.

Here are some ways on how to share the excitement that is Australia Day even if you're not in Down Under at the moment:

• Share your culture. Aussie barbecue, invite your neighbors (Australian or not), especially those you haven't met, and serve Australian food.

• Read a history novel. This is a great way to review Australia's history. Watching a documentary about Australia's past isn't a bad idea, too.

• Dress on Aussie photo montage. Collect all your Australian-themed photos together and arrange them in a small to-make-for-an-interesting display.

• Dress up in Aussie colors. Red, white, and blue reflects the flag. Face paintings, temporary tattoos, jewelry in these colors adds to the idea.

• Make a Facebook photo album. While at it, change your computer wallpaper and accessories to something that reflects patriotism.

• Host an Australian flag. Hanging an Aussie flag in the front yard or from your car is a great way to say you're proud to be Australian.

• Make Australian crafts. Make craft items with the kids that reflect Australian themes, such as platypus masks, koala stuffed toys, kangaroo cut-outs and parental keyrings.

• Send an Australia Day e-card. Look online for sites that provide this resource and wish your fellow Australians a very happy Australia Day. *Kenneth M. del Rosario*

THE koala and the kangaroo makes for an iconic Australian pair.

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The WORLD

Editor Lorraine B. Queaño

Pope reinstates 4 excommunicated bishops

VATICAN CITY—POPE BENEDICT XVI, ACCEDING to the far-right of the Catholic Church, revoked the excommunications of four schismatic bishops on Saturday, including one whose comments denying the Holocaust have provoked outrage.

The decision provided fresh fuel for critics who charge that Benedict's 4-year-old papacy has proven increasingly hostile to moderates and to the sweeping reforms of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s that sought to create a more modern and open Church.

A theologian resigned in the Church's disappointed stance to a recent world. Benedict has favored a smaller church of more ardent believers over a larger one with looser faith, that for focus on doctrinal debates has come at a cost. As in 2006, when Benedict offended Muslims by citing a medieval scholar who called Islam "evil and inhuman," the revocation may help heal an internal rift, but it opens a broader wound.

A particularly contentious part of the reinstatement on Saturday was the inclusion of Richard Williamson, a British-born cleric who in an interview last week said he did not believe that 6 million Jews died in the Nazi gas chambers.

He has also given interviews saying that the US government staged the Sept. 11 attacks as a pretext to invade Afghanistan.

The four reinstated men are members of the Society of St. Pius X, which was founded by a French archbishop, Marcel Lefebvre, in 1970 as a protest against the modernizing reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Lefebvre made the first bishops in unsanctioned consecrations in Switzerland in 1988, prompting the immediate excommunication of all five by Pope John Paul II.

Later that year, Benedict, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, sought to negotiate the Church's relationship with the society. Lefebvre died in 1991.

In a statement on Saturday the Vatican said that the Pope would "reconsider" whether to formally affirm the four as full bishops, but referred to the men by their title.

In recent years, Benedict has made other concessions to the Lefebvrists, including allowing the broader recitation of the Latin Mass, which was made optional in the 1960s Vatican reforms and includes a Good Friday prayer calling for the conversion of Jews.

Chester Gillis, the Roncalli chair in Catholic studies at Georgetown University, said that Irish Brendan and John Neal II before him had tried for years to bring these traditionalists back into the Church, out of concern that their nervous- ness might grow and create an entrenched parallel Church.

"I don't think the Vatican doesn't care about Jewish-Christian relations, but at least it appears that internal Church matters trump external relations," he said. "They're thinking, let's heal our own house whatever the consequences are externally." AFP

With leader captured, Congo rebels vanishing

KIBUMBA, CONGO—ON SATURDAY afternoon, seemingly the entire village of Kibumba lined up alongside the main road and watched a once fearsome rebel army dissolve in front of their eyes.

It was coming, and many villagers were wearing swamp boots and thin slickers. They stood with their feet planted in the mud, some chewing chunks of sugarcane, others nibbling on roasted corn. In front of them, dozens of rebel soldiers climbed aboard a cargo truck, tossing their machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades and backpacks in first and then joyfully fighting one another for a seat.

"We're done," said one rebel, who identified himself as Captain Amisible.

If Kibumba is any indication, the fierce rebellion in eastern Congo headed by this Laurent Nkunda may be ending with his arrest. Rwandan troops captured Nkunda along the Congo-Rwanda border on Thursday night.

It was a stunning turn of events, especially because Rwanda used to be one of Nkunda's staunchest backers. Then days later, hundreds of his troops agreed to be trucked in orderly fashion to be integrated into the army.

Few ever doubted the chaotic multi-pull Nkunda had over his men. He was a true believer, with a messianic conviction that he had been put on this earth to protect fellow Tutsis in Congo from being slaughtered as they were in Rwanda in 1994. He was tall and thin, with a commanding presence and hints of elegance.

He had built one of the best-organized, best-trained fighting armies in Africa. His soldiers always carried their rifles pointed down and kept their ammunition useless, even though they marched through a world of mud.

But all that acclaimed discipline, which had helped the rebels to rout the Congolese government troops just about every time they faced off, seems to have vanished as fast as it is leaders.

Several rebels said it was good that Nkunda had been arrested.

"We always wanted to negotiate," Amisible said. "But Nkunda was blocking us."

Peace, however, is far from assured. There are still many other rebel groups haunting the hills of eastern Congo. Nkunda's force once thought to number around 5,000 fighters, and many have simply melted back into the bush, possibly to fight on. NYT

SINALOAN? Noe Lopez, 41, right, aka "el pescadero de Tijuana (The Straw Maker)," presented to the media in Tijuana, Mexico. Lopez allegedly helped a drug cartel dispose of hundreds of victims by dissolving them in acid.

Brazilian model who lost hands and feet dies

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL—ONE month ago, 23-year-old beauty queen Mariana Bridi was living the dream of many young Brazilian women, trading her striking good looks for a modeling career that promised to lift her family out of poverty.

Then she contracted a seemingly ordinary urinary tract infection. The bacteria spread quickly and inexorably through her body, proving to be extremely drug resistant. In a desperate bid to save her life, doctors amputated her hands and feet. But her family's life was ruined.

Bridi's relatives say she began stumbling at age 14 with the hope of giving "a dignified life to her parents."

Her father is a taxi driver and her mother a house cleaner.

BRIDI AFP

By the age of 18, she was well on her way: In 2007 and 2008, she was a finalist in the Brazilian stage of the Miss World pageant.

Her website said most months she was to participate in the second stage of a modeling competition held in Sao Paulo by Ollan Assis, the Brazilian model scout who discovered supermodel Gisele Bundchen.

Last year, after only a month in the final of the thirteen competitions in South Africa and the final was bikini competitions across the globe.

The Miss World Brazil organizer said she was an example of someone "who knows how to (ultimately) live her life."

This course of her illness was until's.

In late December, she fell ill and doctors in her native state of Espirito Santo—northeast of Rio de Janeiro—initially diagnosed her as having kidney stones.

She returned to a hospital on Jan. 3 in septic shock—life-threatening low blood pressure—from the infection that would have doctors to amputate her hands and feet, then her limbs. Doctors said there was little they could do but pump drugs into her and hope for the best.

It was a nightmare scenario for anyone with an infection: Her body did not react to the latest and most potent drugs designed to the last resort in the war versus the bacteria *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, which is known to be drug-resistant. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Minnesota death brings US salmonella toll to 7

MINNESOTA—The number of deaths linked to the US outbreak of salmonella has risen to seven in the state's first confirmed death in ten 80s. The woman had been living in a long-term care facility, a spokesperson for the Minnesota Department of Health said on Saturday. Her name and date of death were not released. It was the third death tied to salmonella in Minnesota. The spokesperson said he did not know if the woman had eaten peanut butter. Several products containing peanut butter have been recalled as the US government investigates the outbreak of salmonella food poisoning. Reuters

Indian PM Singh makes rapid progress after surgery

NEW DELHI—India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was making "rapid progress" on Sunday after successful coronary bypass surgery and could be back at work ahead of general elections expected before May. "The Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh... talked to his family this morning. The doctors attending on the Prime Minister say that he is stable, conscious and is making rapid progress," the government said in a statement. Singh was to remain in hospital a week and may be able to return to work in a month, doctors involved in his operation have said. Reuters

Suicide car bomb, gunfight kill 22 civilians in Somalia

MOGADISHU—At least 22 civilians were killed on Saturday in Mogadishu by a suicide car bomb targeting Minister Omar's peacekeepers and this ensuing gunfight, an official and medics said. The explosion before survivors heading in a convoy point manned by the Afl forces in Mogadishu's southern K4 intersection, which then rammed into a passenger bus. AFP

Child matador kills 6 bulls

MEXICO CITY—A MEXICO-Mexican child bullfighter killed six young bulls on Saturday in a controversial spectacle that defied protestors and animal-fighting campaigners had hoped to stop.

"I'm happy to have achieved this great victory," said the 11-year-old matador before hearing the bloodied bull ring in Morelia, southwestern Mexico.

A local judge earlier gave the go-ahead for the child to fight six calves aged from 1 to 2 years after reviewing licenses and permits submitted by the child's father, former French bullfighter Mr Lagravere.

Animal rights groups and child protection officials had previously complained to the state human rights commission to suspend the event.

A video of the fight will be sent to Congress for consideration for a world record—but the number of bulls killed not the age of the bullfighter.

Some 3,500 people, including many young children, gathered in the ring to witness the bullfight.

Several bullfights by Michelito were banned in France last summer after protests from anti-bullfighting associations.

Michelito has killed dozens of bulls in Mexico since he was 6 years old.

The anti-bullfighting alliance in Poitou said it had targeted him over other younger matadors because "he fights in contra- dicting to kill." AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE
Federer dodges upset ax; Jankovic stumbles /A32

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendrez • Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

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Record 13-shot win by Murakami

By Marvey R. Castillo

STA. ROSA, LAGUNA—AFTER A record-setting first round, it was only fitting that Artemio Murakami went all the way yesterday with a record victory margin in the 2008 The Country Club Invitational.

The burly 23-year-old Murakami, who won the course record apart with an eight-under-par 62, became the only player to break par on the first day with a 66 and a 269 total that smashed him with event's biggest winning margin of 13 strokes.

"This is very special," said Murakami, who has been tagged by no less than the legendary Frankie Miñoza as his most logical successor following his breakthrough victory in the 2007 Asian Tour during the Johor Open in Malaysia.

"This is the biggest (local) event in the country and now I have one (championship) of my own. My buddies already have (bets) so it was a motivation for me coming here," he added.

Murakami, who started the last round with a four-stroke lead over runner Rolfeo Bayron, broke Jovie Pegonzon's 13-stroke victory last year over Angelo Que, the 2007 winner, who was second again this time with a 73.

The key

"No doubt that the key was the 62," the long-hitting Filipino-Japanese, who remained one year's senior here, said.

He obliterated the 66 Pegonzon scored during the Manila Southeast Asian Games in 2005 to take a five-stroke lead and was up by four in the scorecard crunch with a 70 and 68.

Journeyman Sanny Zacate carded the second-best effort of the day, a four-under 70, and 2006 runner-up Jerome Geluz was tied a 71 and Mhar Pozzy a 72 to finish joint third a stroke behind Que.

Murakami won P1.35 million out of the P4.8 million pot while Que, the reigning Philippine Open champion, took home P695,000.

Zacate, Pozzy and Dominico won P326,667 each.

Rolfeo Bayron, now leaning on the next ICTSI spearhead with former PF amateur champs Neville Jacosa and Anthony Rotinsulu set to turn pro in March, struggled to a 79 and finished in solo sixth.

"It was very tough," said the 27-year-old Davao native, who had barrelled the pace by winning the kickoff leg of the revival of the pro-circuit last November in Subic.

Unlike on Saturday when he was pressured early, no one was able to come close to Murakami in the final round. He opened up with a birdie from the fringe on No. 1 before pitching up smartly shot on the fifth to set the tone.

Cruise control

Murakami was on cruise control the rest of the way after Bayron stumbled with a bogie-double-41 in deep rough of consecutive. He birdied the 17th for the second straight day then finished in style by holing out from the greenside bunker on the eighth to salvage a bogey.

Pegonzon, Sallesford at 4-70 and finished out of the top 10, tied with Mardo Olives in 11th spot at 205. Milton Real at 75 for 284.

Tie-breaker

DB—S. Bayron (3-7369-41-79) at 269 -4. Que (2-71-70-72) at 269 -4. Zacate (5-71-71-73) at 269 -4. Geluz (5-71-71-73) at 269 -4. Dominico (5-71-71-73) at 269 -4. Pozzy (5-71-71-73) at 269 -4. Real (5-71-71-75) at 269 -4. Ignacio (5-71-73-74) at 269 -4. Fernandez (5-71-73-74) at 269 -4. Pedrosa (5-71-73-72) at 269 -4. Salvador (5-71-75-71) at 269 -4. Pagunsan (4-73-71-71) at 269 -4. Aguinaldo (5-73-70-73) at 269 -4. Sison (5-73-73-73) at 269 -4. Jr. Sison (5-73-73-73) at 269 -4. Jumalon (5-73-69-73) at 269 -4. Mina (5-71-71-73) at 269 -4. Fernandez (5-73-73-73) at 269 -4. Lituania (5-73-73-73) at 269 -4. Cruz (5-73-73-73) at 269 -4. Ramos (5-73-73-73) at 269 -4. Ramos (5-73-73-73) at 269 -4. Ramos

House eyes higher status for PSC, Cabinet rank for chair

By Jose Marasco

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON youth and sports development is hoping to come up with a set of guidelines in a bid to elevate the Philippine Sports Commission as a department under the Office of the President.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco said the committee chaired by Cong. Jalosjos of Zamboanga Del Norte will conserve any time soon to discuss a bill that will promote the PSC chair to a Cabinet level.

"There were suggestions from the committee to make the PSC a department for the chairman to have a voice in the cabinet," said Cojuangco.

He added that the committee may recommend that the PSC chair become the presidential adviser on sports while simultaneously functioning as a member of the cabinet.

Cojuangco said the committee is also in the planning stage of amending RA 6847 to incorporate all the officials of the PSC in its relationship with the Philippine Olympic Committee and the national sports associations.

The other committee members pushing for the amendment of RA 6847, the late Eliot created the PSC, are Mr. Calixto Catindig (Nueva Ecija 3rd), Julio Antonino Castrillo (Ilocos Sur), Salvador Escudero (Sorsogon) and Governor Santos City) and PSC chair Monico Puentevella (Bacolod City). Also supporting the move is committee vice chair Roberto Puno (Davao Del Norte), Antipolo City).

As the government's financial arm for sports, the PSC subsidizes the programs of the NSAs and the training of athletes besides providing monetary support for the country's participation in high-level international meets such as the Southeast Asian Games, Asian Games and the Olympics.

Cojuangco is also hoping for a fixed source for the PSC chairman and his counterparts to sustain a long-term program material for the partnership of the government agency and the POC to prosper.

With a fixed source of at least six years for the top officials of the PSC, Cojuangco said the chairman and the commissioners will be implementing the projects without the risk of being removed from office any time.

The former Tarlac representative, however, cautioned that the appointees of the PSC chair and the commissioners should come from a list of applicants recommended by the POC and the NSAs to preserve officials without impressive credentials in sports management from holding office.

A major change in the PSC looms after the resignation of William Kostiner as PSC chair who reportedly accepted by President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday. It reliable Malacañang source said former softball chief Harry Angeles would take Kostiner's place.

HEAVYWEIGHTS Mongolian grand champion Asashoryu (left) lifts opponent Hakuho out of the ring to win the New Year grand sumo tournament in Tokyo. AFP

UMALI CUP CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Comebacking Dableo catches GM Paragua

Standings after six rounds

5.5 points—IM Paragua, 5; Dableo, 5—1; Ivan, 5; Gomez, 5; Villamayor, 5; Abasa, 5; Bacojo, 5; Badora, 5; Cordero, 4.5—12; Lapis, 4; Bocalan, 4; Bella, 3; Bendaling, 3; Dungaran, 3; Bagamaspad, 2; de Ocampo, 0; Panuncio, 0; Legaspi, 0; Baca, 0; Gamo

PALAWAN CITY—GRANDMASTER-candidate Ronald Dableo clinched sole first place of his old brilliance in the 6th Mark Paragua for the lead in the sixth round of the 2009 Nueva Ecija Gov. Aurelio Umali Cup Open chess championship at the Rizal Shrine Suites and Hotel here Saturday.

Dableo, eager to redeem himself following a controversial suspension for his role in the alleged game-fixing scandal three years ago, swept his two assignments to move one a tie for the lead with Paragua with 5.5 points.

Dableo trounced sport nominee Ali Bustamante in only 39 moves of the Old Indian in the 45th round and fellow IM Oliver Dableo in 44 moves of the Reti opening in 46 moves in the 6th round to pocket his chunk of the P200,000 top prize in this prestigious tournament organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP in cooperation with the Nueva Ecija provincial government).

Paragua, the third highest-rated player here, ended the giant-killing run of comebacking Edgardo Garma in 56 moves of the Sicilian in the 85th round and then drew with GM John Paul Gomez in 36 moves of the Slav.

Paragua and Dableo will clash in a highly anticipated duel in the seventh round.

Seven players, led by top seed GM Eugene Torre and 2000 Palawan Open champion GM Rustamovtsev "Rony" Villamayor, shared third to ninth places with five points.

Torre, the top seed here in the absence of super GM Wesley So, overwhelmed Jan Jan Rimmel Garcia in the fifth round and IM Chito Garma in the sixth round to climb into contention with still three rounds remaining.

DABLEO: Comeback

Villamayor, a member of the Philippine team to the 38th World Chess Olympiad in Dresden, Germany last Nov. 12-26, crushed Ramon Lubay in 41 moves of the French defense to be unbeaten Aliber Rivera in 61 moves of the King's Indian to stay within striking distance.

Rise with five points were Gomez, fifth Richard Bacojo, Ronald Bacosal and Ruelo Badora and Little Jansen Jagiel Cordero.

Garma, who ended the elusive GM title during the Dresden Olympiad, subdued FM Jessie Dungaran in 37 moves of the Sicilian Kiapik.

Bacojo outmaneuvered NM Elias Lao in 46 moves of the Philidor and upset GM Darwin Laylo in 56 moves of the Scandinavian; Bacosal drew with GM Jayson Gonzales in 24 moves of the Tromposky then beat FM Finn Heiler in only 22 moves of the King's Indian Attack; Badora trounced Vic Neil Villanueva and Jayson Salubre; and Cordero outplayed Reuben Tolentino and Edgardo Garma.

Laylo, Gonzales and IM Rolando Meiia led a big group of players with 4.5 points.

Noble drew with Edmundo Garza and lost Raymund Salcedo.

A total of 134 players, including six GMs and eight IMs, are entered in the season-opening tournament which offers a guaranteed cash prize of P600,000.

Aside from the P200,000 top prize, the tournament also offers P100,000 to the second-up and P60,000 to the third place.

Other cash prizes are fourth place P70,000; fifth place P60,000; sixth place, P50,000; seventh place P40,000; eighth place P30,000; ninth place P25,000; 10th place P15,000; 11th place P10,000; 12th place P9,000; 13th place P8,000; 14th place P7,000; 15th place P6,000; and 16th to 20th place 25,000 each.

Rey Gamora

So, Swede bet share Corus chess lead

Standings after seven rounds

Leaders—M. Ke (GE), 7; Parimarjan (GE), 6; Leko, 5.5—3. Topalov (BUL), 4—M. Krasenkow (Netherlands), 3.5—S. Ernst (ISR), 3; Sethuraman (IND), 2; Hoang (VIE), 1; Nisipeanu (Netherlands), 0—U. Hoeksema (NE), 5. Giri (NED), 4; Van Wely (NED), 3.5—Nikolaev (Russia), 3; Verhees (NED), 2; Pelletier (Netherlands), 1

WIJK AAN ZEE, NETHERLANDS—After pulling off back-to-back victories, top seed GM Wesley So settled for a draw against No. 3 seed Wojtek Duzo, with Hichar of India in the seventh round of the 71st Corus Chess tournament at the De Moriaan Community Center here Saturday.

So followed up victories over Elds Eduardo Iturrizaga of Venezuela and Marcus Leon Fuyon of Mexico in the previous two rounds, with a draw against the only female participant.

The draw was enough for the 21-year-old to keep a share of the lead with third seed GM Tiger Hillarp Persson of Sweden with five points out of a possible seven. He will take on ninth seed GM Frank Holder of Germany in the eighth round.

First ever sports rehab center a shot in the arm

A JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN THE Far Eastern University and The Medical City, the country's first ever Sports Performance and Rehabilitation Center (Sparc) was launched last January 20 at the technology building of FEU along Nicanor Reyes St.

Spare was established to assist athletes, non-athletes and weekend warriors enhance and strengthen their performances and provide remedies for their recovery from injuries.

The pioneering project is a collaboration between medical and sports science specialists. Spare boasts orthopedists who cover a variety of conditions and rehab medicine consultants who complement them.

In an interview, Spare president Dr. Hilary Bergonia said that "While skill has an impact on athletic talent, it does not equate to overall fitness. Skill alone does not guarantee an athlete a great career in sports.

"At Spare, an athlete's performance can be quantified, measured and monitored with the help of state-of-the-art technology and equipment. Our science consultants train the athletes to regain their previous athletic performance levels before they are injured) or improve such levels through strength and conditioning, fitness and physiological screening, and body fat screening, among many others.

He added that it raises the risk of getting injured—its sports is extremely high, a good rehabilitation center is imperative to help athletes recover quickly. Spare has clinical services including orthopedic rehabilitation and occupational and functional rehabilitation.

On the other hand, FEU athletic counselor Jaime Mendiola underscored the establishment of Spare, saying "He had long wanted a venue where we can treat sports-related injuries using superior equipment and professionally trained rehabilitation therapists."

Last year, FEU Tamaraw key player Mac Belmonte was shot by a gunman which resulted in a punctured lung. It has that six weeks Belmonte recovered after cardiopulmonary rehabilitation and training under the sports performance enhancement program at The Medical City.

During the launching ceremony, Dr. Idris Bergonia, chief executive of The Medical City and Dr. Lydia Echauz, president of FEU, led the guests who graced the affair.

After his impressive performances in the Philippine Basketball Association since 2000, the Red Bull Barako team slumped badly last year and landed disorganized in the pressie. The Philoxinia franchise not only lost many star players but also longtime head coach Yeng Guiao.

But if you think team owner George C. Chua is quitting, you're dead wrong. As a matter of fact, the approachable, self-spoken owner is even rebuilding the team by beefing up its lineup with the acquisitions of two more players and an import, who has yet to be named.

It has also renamed the team, the also Red, for the next PBA import-laden conference which gets going on Feb. 26.

According to Raffy Cuenco, the team's alternate governor in the PBA board, "Barako Bull is one failed product. It is a core energy drink that Guiao created. Like Red Bull but costs so much less."

Comparing Barako's record with the other teams that made it in the finals since 2000, management is satisfied because it was able to post one of the best achievements in the 34-year-old history of the league.

In eight years, the team's won three Phil titles: 2003-04 Fiesta Cup and back-to-back 2004 and 2012 Governor's Cup championships) and made Final Four appearances in the 2005-06 Philippine Cup and the 2004-05 Texnitites Fiesta Conference. "Isn't that impressive enough?" asked Cuenco rhetorically.

Meanwhile, assistant head coach Gee Abanilla takes over the coaching chores in the absence of Yeng Guiao. "That setup will remain until a new head coach and his staff are formally appointed," said team manager Andy Ang.

ALL SET Rudy Biscocho, Cordova president Raul Anthony Concepcion and Concepcion Industries vice president for consumer service Raul Patrick Concepcion (from left) join hands after sealing the deal for the staging of the 2nd Cordova Race for the Whale Sharks. The run, which includes a 21.8 half marathon, is slated on March 21 at the Global City in Taguig.

Abap's new project: Talent database

By Colduff Tejan

THE AMATEUR BOXING ASSOCIATION OF the Philippines (Abap) is making sure no talent will be put to waste as it scours the countryside for fighters who have the potential of giving the country its first gold medal in the Olympics.

Abap secretary-general Ronnie Gregorio said they are creating a computerized database for the country's amateur boxers in the latest move to professionalize the organization under new president Ricky Vargas.

The database will contain the profiles, fight records and medical histories of the boxers, Gregorio said.

"We want to keep track of all of our boxers regardless of their talent level," he said. "This is a systematic way to know our boxers and their needs."

The Abap started gathering data during the Smart National Amateur Boxing Championships that ended in Bacolod City Friday.

Among the prized discoveries in that weeklong competition were 16-year-old Dave Peñaloza, the son of former two-time world champion Doelle Boy Sr., Filipino-Australian Robin Pulido and John Tesing of Misamis Oriental.

Pulido, a featherweight who was discovered and brought in for tournament by 1972 Munich Olympian Ricardo Fortaleza, has been invited to join the national pool.

The national coaching staff also sent letters to the family Tesing, who trounced World Youth Championship campaigner Melbert Labrando, for Misamis Oriental head's mentor, Roberto Salvado told the bigwigs.

Peñaloza, whose bigmakers proved too much to handle for his bantamweight rivals in the youth base division, is also tipped to join the national pool, where he could join order Teodoro, Doelle Boy Jr.

But Gregorio said the Abap and its coaching staff, including Cuban coaches Enrique Jimenez Tamer and Dagoberto Rojas Sosa, are still evaluating the performances of the boxers.

Cavs equal Lakers' league-best mark; Heat crack Magic

SALT LAKE CITY—AFTER BEATING THE BUZZER TO GIVE CLEVELAND A WIN the night before, LeBron James enjoyed a much less dramatic finish Saturday.

The result was the same: The Cavaliers won for the third straight time and tied with the Los Angeles Lakers at a .818 win percentage.

James scored 35 points, pulled down 14 rebounds and was just one assist short of a triple-double while leading Cleveland to a 102-97 win over the Utah Jazz on Saturday night.

His Williams added 25 points and four assists, including three alley-oops to James, as the Cavs closed out a four-game road trip with their third straight win.

"We came in with the mind-set to close out this road trip the right way and we did that," said James, who finished 14-for-27 from the field with his usual array of dazzling dunks.

Cleveland's Anderson Varejao finished with 14 points and seven rebounds, going 7-for-8 from the floor while filling in for injured center Zydrunas Ilgauskas.

Devron Williams had a season-high 16 assists and scored 17 points for Utah, which had won seven straight at home.

Paul Millsap finished with 24 points and 13 rebounds, but the Jazz could not keep up with the Cavs at the end despite Cleveland's late eight-9-day in a 106-105 win at Golden State on James' 19-foot jumper just before time expired. On Saturday, all James had to do to the final seconds was dribble out the clock after Cleveland held off Utah's final push.

The Jazz missed two three-pointers that could have tied it in the final minute and another triple after Cleveland had gone up by five points.

"We were right there. We had chances. We just didn't come up with the win," Devron Williams said.

Williams tied it at 91 with a layup for Utah, then Ilo Williams answered with a three-point play to start an 11-4 run for Cleveland over the last 2:41. Ivaha Pavlovic scored 22 and grabbed a crucial defensive rebound as Utah tried to rally one more time.

James had just two points during Cleveland's closing run as Williams and Pavlovic handled most of the scoring.

In Miami, the home team ended its run of 10 straight losses to Florida a tall Orlando, 103-97.

Dwyane Wade scored 27 points to lead the Heat.

Miami squandered a 15-point lead covering the fourth quarter, but still narrowly held on.

The Heat finished with four turnovers, an all-time franchise low.

In Philadelphia, the Sixers welcomed the return of Elton Brand to the lineup with a win over New York, 116-110.

Brand, who missed 16 games after dislocating his right shoulder, had six points in just 13 minutes play off the bench.

Andre Iguodala scored 24 points for the Sixers, who were for the eighth time in nine games to finally get square with a 21-21 record. AP

OTHER RESULTS (at Ontario): OK Alcazar 87-Santa Ana 104; Diego 101-Rancho Cucamonga 88

CLEVELAND'S LeBron James takes the ball to the basket.

Mosley stuns Margarito, takes welter crown

LOS ANGELES—AMERICAN SHANE Mosley dominated from start to finish, knocking out Antonio Margarito of Mexico in the first round in his career in the ninth round Saturday to win the WBA welterweight title in a rematch against.

Margarito was coming off an impressive victory over previously unbeaten Miguel Cotto six months ago, and boxing experts had dubbed the 36-year-old ace of the top pound-for-pound fighters in the world.

Despite his advancing age, the 37-year-old Mosley used his superior speed from the beginning, and Margarito never was able to display the power and footwork he showed against Cotto.

"It was my strategy, my focus, my game plan," Mosley said when asked what was the fight. It was a tough fight, but it was a great plan. It was my left hook. I caught [Fernando] Vargas with it, I caught [Ricardo] Mayorga with it.

"He's a tough fighter, he had a lot of endurance. I prepared very hard, I trained hard. He was very powerful, but he couldn't resist my rhythm."

Mosley brought to Santos Richard one to coach him for this fight, explaining his father, Jack.

"When you have a great game plan and an excellent athlete, then everything works out very well," Richardson said.

The bout was held before an announced crowd of 20,820—largest to attend a sporting event at Staples Center since it opened in October 1999. The bout was mostly pro-Margarito despite the fact that Mosley grew up in suburban Pomona, but it turned Ride into the boat began.

"I feel OK. I was just getting caught over and over," Margarito said.

Margarito didn't win a single round on one judge's scorecard, one set another and two saw the other. The Associated Press had Mosley every round but one.

Mosley raised his record to 46-5 with 29 knockouts. Margarito, known as the "Tijuana Tornado," dropped to 37-4 with 27 knockouts after being dropped for the first time.

Both fighters earned around $2.4 million from the bout. AP

SHAME Mosley lands a right to the face of Antonio Margarito during their WBA welterweight bout.

Stricker sets PGA record

LA QUINTA, CALIFORNIA—STEVE Stricker birdied six of the last seven holes in a sizzling 10-under-62 to set a PGA Tour scoring record and take a three-shot lead after four rounds of the Bob Hope Classic Saturday.

The American, who shot a third-round 61 Friday, had a quiet start, opening with four pars at the Stadium Private course, one of four low-scoring venues hosting this week's 90-hole pro-am.

The 43-year-old then caught fire and picked up shots on 10 of his next 14 holes, including four straight to end his bogey-free round and cruise to the top of the leaderboard, three strokes clear of compatriots Jim Furyk.

Stricker's 33-under 259 sets a PGA Tour record for the lowest 72-hole total, bettering the 35-under 261 carded by South African Ernie Els at the 2003 Mercedes-Benz championship. Reuters

SJC Int'l 8-Cock derby on today

A WILD SHOWDOWN OF CHAMPIONS will highlight the SJC International 8-Cock Derby which starts today at the San Juan Coliseum.

Today's Fight will feature the 2-cock elimination with the second round set on Wednesday. Three-way action on Wednesday must submit their entries tomorrow.

All eyes will be on the Gaupe entries of popular American breeder James Campbell of Ohio and Californian Jorge Torres (Gonzo Manigat, one of three champions in the 2005 World Slasher Cup (see December).

Joe Sandoval of California, who won the SJC International Derby in 2007, will team up this time with Derrick Asuncion, Cleave Simpson and hosting star Manny Pacquiao.

For more information, please call SJC at 725-5369 and 725-6863.

THREE-OR-THREE On the floor, from (L to R): Spoon and Brian Villar, new Technical of Garret Gamotan (Mexico), Genaro Pedroza of Kentucky, Cindy Mateo of Ohio, Richard Harris, Juan Richard and Richard Lucas, Gerry Gomez, Juan Rodolfo Pineda, Tommy Ty of Ohio, Mr. Ben Sabal Jr. Cebu, Pat Castellano, Rex Pascual, Pres. Ving Rhy of Manila, Art Fernando, Rey de Dios, Gov. Celso Ring Plata, Elmo Castro, Jose Alino Santos, Rudy Ribano, Major Rudy Tamayo and Jose Alino Santos.

Lopez rules DMG golf

LISA LOPEZ CAPTURED THE OVERALL CHAMPIONship of the Ninth Dunlop Gamaco-St. Monica golf tournament held recently at the Mimosa Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City.

Another St. Jonas emerged champion in Group 1, Roger Lim rated Group 2, Vic Dingcong topped Group 3, Ricardo Yap prevailed in the ladies' division and Ben Sabalburo won in the senior category.

Finishing second and third in the different categories were Raul Jorge and Boy Bacolod (Group 1), Ed Monroe and Gaudencio Antonino (Group 2), Jorge Yulo and Antonio Legarda (Group 3), Teddy Dimson and Norma Dee (ladies) and Gil Angeles and Eugene Campos (senior).

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT, CENTRAL VISAYAS (DOH-CHD, CV), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Project	:	PROCUREMENT OF OFFICE SERVICE VEHICLES
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	:	PhP2,490,000.00
Delivery Period	:	One Month

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 3 years with an amount of at least 50% of the project's prepared cost. Bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	January 26 to February 5, 2009 (except Saturday, Sunday and holiday) DOH-CHD, CV, Osmeña Blvd., Cebu City
2. Pre-bid Conference	February 5, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. Tejero Conference Room DOH-CHD, CV, Osmeña Blvd., Cebu City
3. Opening of Bids	February 18, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. Tejero Conference Room DOH-CHD, CV, Osmeña Blvd., Cebu City

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders, as upon presentation of the copy of Details of the Bid Proposal downloaded from PHILGEPS website, and/or payment of a non-refundable amount of PhP1,000 in cash to the DOH-CHD, CV Cashier.

The Department of Health – DOH- Central Visayas reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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(Sgd.) ENGR. MIGUEL T. GERVACIO, LL.B.
BAC Chairman

SPORTS

Federer dodges upset ax; Jankovic stumbles

ROGER Federer in quarterfinals versus Juan Martin del Potro.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—FOR TWO SETS, it looked like Roger Federer's run at a record 14th Grand Slam title was going to be derailed by Tomas Berdych at the Australian Open.

Then the 6-foot-5 Czech had a meltdown and Federer, unnerved, recovering for a 6-0, 6-7 (4), 6-0, 6-4, 6-2 win Sunday—only his fourth career comeback from two sets down—to reach the quarterfinals.

"You've got to hang in there, there's no calm solution, "Federer said. "... Tried to weather the storm. He was hitting the ball so heavy and I believe he pushed me to the limit."

Nikunor's No. 1 Jelena Jankovic had already gone down in straight sets to 2007 Wimbledon finalist Marion Bartoli, 6-1, 6-4, in the day's first match on Hisd Laver Arena. No. 3 Dinara Safina had a narrow escape in the subsequent match, saving a match point before beating another French woman, 40th-ranked Aravane Rezai, 6-4, 7-6 (5).

A massive upset result looomed in the late afternoon when 20th-seeded Berdych was on top for the first two sets, sending Federer around the baseline on the defensive. He consistently targeted Federer's backhand with his powerful, kicking serve.

But Federer started finding his range and rallied in the third set and the momentum, already shifting toward him as Berdych's nerves mounted, really shifted his way at the start of the fourth set.

Berdych recovered from double-break point to deuce, and Federer got another breakpoint on a short line call. Berdych wanted to challenge, but no replay was available due to a technical glitch, so the call stood. Berdych argued with the chair umpire to no avail with the crowd booking out in jeers, then netted a forehand to fall behind for the only break of the set.

Federer led 4-0 in the fifth but, serving at 5-2, nervously squandered double match point when double-faulted to give Berdych a break chance.

He fanned chose, Berd lunch-break-on—the last was No. 20 for the match—then leapt in the air with a big "fist".

"I enjoy those kind of fights. It doesn't happen all the time. It's always special," Federer said. "I hope it's a good omen."

"I feel like I would play a couple more sets, so that's a good sign."

Federer has won 12 Grand Slam singles titles, one short of Pete Sampras' all-time record of 14.

Federer next plays No. 8 Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina, who advanced, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 over No. 19 Martin Ellis of Croatia.

The last time he rallied from 0-2 to win in five was against Rafael Nadal at Miami in 2005.

Federer, who held the No. 1 ranking for 237 consecutive weeks until losing it to Nadal last August, surely has unveiled to come back from two sets.

He's done it twice in majors, against Argentina's Gaspo Jungmar in the second round at the 2005 French Open and Dutchman Peter Wessels at the 2000 US Open.

Federer beat Berdych in the corresponding round here last year—after he'd been pushed to 10-8 in the fifth set against Serbia's Janko Tipsarevic. He lost to another Serb, Novak Djokovic, in the semifinals.

Djokovic, who went on to win his first major by beating Jo-Wilfried Tsonga in last year's final, was playing 2006 runner-up Marcos Baghdatis on Monday night.

The winner there will play seventh-seeded Andy Roddick, who ousted No. 22 Tomas Berdych 7-5, 6-1, 6-3.

Safina, who was ousted 5-7 and 4-6 after serving for the match, failed to win 6-2, 2-6, 7-5 to reach the Australian Open quarterfinals for the first time.

Nastoli was the aggressor against Jankovic and it wasn't enough to suppressed.

"Yeah, it's obviously disappointing. No body likes to lose," said 23-year-old Jankovic, who remains without a Grand Slam singles title. If Safina wins, she'll replace Jankovic atop the rankings. AP

FRANCE'S Marion Bartoli serves to Serbia's Jelena Jankovic.

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BUSINESS

Group signs Meralco purchase deal with GFIs

Board changes seen in today's meet

By Doris C. Dumlao and Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

A LOCAL FUND BELIEVED TO BE ALLIED WITH San Miguel Corp. has taken control of close to 7 percent of Manila Electric Co. ahead of the food and beverage giant's bid to acquire key boardroom representation at a special Meralco board meeting today.

Global 5000 Investment Inc., led by prominent businessmen Hugo Zobel, former Trade Minister Roberto Ongpin and conglomerate king Aurelio Campos, has executed the deal to acquire the voting rights of the state-owned Social Security System and Development Bank of the Philippines in Meralco...sale cost waiting for the settlement of a disputed portion held by Land Bank of the Philippines that was supposed to be included in the block sale, but was removed said.

But the sources said Global 5000 would still acquire the 3.6-percent stake controlled by Landbank as soon as the latter regains control of the shares. Landbank was left out of the deal, at least for the moment, after its shares were cancelled by Meralco incidentally on the eve of the block sale agreement among the three government financial institutions (GFIs) in early December.

SSS president Romulo Neri confirmed to the Inquirer the partial ownership of the GFI block sale. "The sale has been approved by our board at P80 per share, the same price at which GSIS (Government Service Insurance System) sold," Neri said in a phone interview on Saturday.

Neri said the SSS' shares were equivalent to about 6 percent of Meralco's total issued shares—not enough for a board seat—and were earlier given as pension to the GSIS, which held a 27-percent block. DBP's stake was equivalent to about 1 percent, other sources said.

After GSIS president Winston Garcia's much-publicized criticism on how the Lopezes managed Meralco, the pension fund sold its stake to San Miguel in October last year. In December, the remaining GFIs—DBP, Landbank and SSS—signed a deal to sell their Meralco holdings to Global 5000 at exactly the same terms that GSIS got from San Miguel.

In time, Landbank is still contesting the cancellation of its shares, saying that the basis of action was a

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Easy Riding

Biker groups partner with SME Nation for better business

If we are just to look past recent nought stereotypes, bikers are really nice people. Really. These black-leather clad motorbike are far from being true hell-raisers; they are actually successful corporate individuals and independent businessmen who earn their a real concern for the case ahead in business. To a large extent they are believers in intellectual technology. It only make sense to show them the wonders of ICT technology in ensuring their continued prosperity.

And so last December 11, 2008, when the thunderous roar of more than 200 BMW, Ducati, and Yamaha motorbikes was heard and felt in the Fort, specifically Bonifacio High Street's 9th Avenue, it signalled the start of SME Nation's sponsored "Biker Night". It looked to be an interesting combination of leisure for entrepreneurial success. A lot of entrepreneurs who rode in were quite interested to essential SME Nation solutions that would make their businesses more efficient and effective as well as safeguard their assets.

On center stage at the buoyantly event interactive displays highlighting the full capabilities of PLDT Watcher Corp.'s rolling a splash in entrepreneurial circles. PLDT Watcher delivers an effective security and monitoring solution consisting of IP cameras, motion sensors and dedicated links to give business owners a 24-hour "eye" on their operations or business sites. Captured video stills or clips are delivered seamlessly to owners' laptops, PC's or even their 3G mobile phones.

Among leading biker groups and clubs present at the event were BNT (Bike Night Thursdays), Bombtec, and AMBC (Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam). They were soon as interested in both the simplicity and the revolutionary capabilities of PLDT Watcher as their mates of multi-million Yahoo on gleaming display, some were true show-pieces more closely resembling rolling works of art.

For those rugged individual entrepreneurs who consider a first and leap into technology for their businesses, PLDT myDSL Dsl also looked good, particularly with its FREE IP- power, Shape, Work Configured (SWC) P-plans, three full online monitoring capability for multi-branch operations, leading them real-time transactional data exactly when they need it. If they truly can't keep off the road for long, MyWorld's newest upgrades allows them to keep tabs on business or and the set on their laptops with real mobile internet capability, a solution just as mobile as they are.

It seems that for the most part boys will stay boys, enamoured by the glitz and promise of technology. For these groups of easy riders, SME Nation gives them technology every bit as exciting for their businesses even for the moments they step off their steel horses.

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Out-of-the-box physical planning

LAST WEEK'S COLUMN ON THE INFORMAL transport sector drew more reader feedback than usual. As one would expect, there are opposing views on the matter. One view sympathizes with our fellow Filipinos who drive dirty tricycles or jeepneys as job of last resort. One reader, however, offers a not-so-flattering alternative explanation: to Dr. Osmilda Guillen's observation of preference for income regularity on why these occupations are favored over, say farming. Perhaps the more perfect is drive tricycles, our reader writes, "because they can sit while waiting for customers, relax, take a nap, smoke a cigarette or two, and exchange stories with other drivers. It is far better than those working on a farm that schedule their working on a farm that schedule their working hour from sunrise until sunset." The "indolence of the Filipino" farm, as lamented by Dr. Jose Rizal over a century ago? Could this be why our productivity is low relative to our more dynamic neighbors?

Efficient transport

The opposing, less sympathetic view tends to come from passengers stuck in traffic, and those who have experienced efficient mass transport systems abroad, including in Japan. A reader says Tokyo residents may not have the door-to-door options that we Filipinos enjoy, but their mass rail system is so convenient in its reach and in its efficient fine carrying a vehicle to traffic self-storage.

Readers see this as something to aspire and plan for as we further expand our own mass transit systems. We cannot go on tolerating inefficient and pollutive jeepneys, they argue, on the excuse that they provide livelihoods to thousands of families. The challenge is in providing them alternative as we bring our transport systems to world standards.

NO FREE LUNCH

Clarito F. Barbito

Mass transport is particularly challenging to us because of our geography as an archipelago faced with a lot of inland waterways. Still overall rail (national highways interconnecting land) and water transport systems to link our major islands is a good way to go. With numerous inland waterways, a nationwide bridge building program is also important, and I strongly drawn faster lines for domestic air. But we have a long way to go in improving and interconnecting other transport modes, including railroads; I have constantly lamented, for example, how the LRT/MRT system does not connect to our airports the way they do in other capitals abroad.

Alternative ways

By some, our archipelagic nature and numerous inland waterways are more of opportunity rather than challenge. Why, they ask, have we failed to use our waterways to good advantage as modes of transport, both for people and commodities? One can cite the congested roads as a case in point.

Where my oldest son began attending the UP College of Medicine in the late '90s, he opted to use the then new commuter boat service on Laguna de Bay. It made sense then: It took only 45 minutes from the Los Baños municipal pier to Guadalupe, and just another 20 minutes or so by PUJ (jeep) to Padre Faura, so against your heavy of land route of three hours from Los Baños. Alas, it wasn't to last for long. As weeks passed, my son observed the boats began making more unannounced stops along the way to pick up passengers, and it is no thing get frequently stuck in water lily clumps near the shore. As such, the predictability of travel time was lost, passengers started dropping out (including my younger sister) and, and the service eventually folded.

Our coastal waterways also hold promise for short transport. In the 1990s, I had heard of proposals to link Manila Bay with points farther up the western coast in Bataan and Zambales with the same kind of Gen coal being used for the Manila-Corregidor, Cebu-Tagbilaran or Iloilo-Bacolod ferries. Similar opportunities exist exist in Mindanao, especially where rough land topography makes land transport less economical.

Wild ideas

It is time to take a long hard look at our plans for our country's physical development once again, and consider ideas that have been around for some time but were simply suppressed for one reason or another. I recall, for example, how President Ramos used to talk of creating a canal across Luzon's "waist," i.e., at its narrowest point near the Bicol Peninsula, to create a "short-cut" connecting the Pacific side and the western side of Luzon, thereby saving sea vessels from having to go around the Bicol Peninsula. There's also the idea of building an Eastern Luzon coastal highway to connect Aurora, Quezon with Port Area in Cagayan, Isabela. The long-standing Eastern seaport at the Infanta-Real area that continues to be on the drawing board.

Beyond transport facilities, other aspects of physical planning are need to revisit include land use, housing and settlements and disaster prevention. We are technologically much better equipped now, in fact, for such a planning exercise. The National Mapping and Resource Information Authority has a wealth of maps ranging from population maps to environmental vulnerability maps to inform the exercise. And we need not start from scratch either. Neda's 10-year-old National Framework for Physical Planning (2000-2030) has been gathering dust, as plan documents tend to, but it is there to study a new push, and in the face of new realities, some fresh, new out-of-the-box ideas perhaps.

My readers who expressed preference not to perpetuate an inefficient and pollutive transport system are the segment that it provides much-needed jobs must be encouraged. But then again, countries that made great strides in their development did so in directions that have never come from conventional, not popular wisdom.

Comments welcome at cfbarbito@yahoo.com

Subic posts 85% drop in investments

By Abigail L. Flo

THE SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN Authority reported an 85-percent drop in committed investments in 2008 to $249 million from $1.7 billion in 2007.

Data from the SBMA Business Group showed the number of approved projects leaning to Subic Freeport actually grew by 6 percent last year to 186 from 175 the year before, but the investments involved were significantly lower than years ago levels.

Investments approved in Subic reached an all-time high of $1.71 billion in 2007. In 2006, SBMA-approved projects amounted to $1.46 billion.

Despite the huge drop in the investment value in 2008, SBMA administrator Armand Arreza said Subic was still in a good position as an investment destination.

"Subic continued to attract big-ticket projects, while remaining one of the biggest employers in the region," Arreza said in a statement.

The projects approved in 2008 were mostly in the tourism, manufacturing and services sectors. The biggest of which that of Korea-led consortium Subic Sinsero Corp., worth $175 million, involving the construction of a high-speed ferry facility in Subic's Cubang area, now in the finals disposal.

Hanil E&C Subic Inc. committed to invest $15 million to put up resthouse and high-rise commercial residential buildings in the area. Another $6.72 million would be infused into the new ferry port by Hanjin Abunod Leasak Hanjin project Corp. to purchase over-aged container cranes, shores, rolls, paper stores, service pads, trays and duplex boards.

The SBMA also approved an investment of $6.58 million by George Dmery Medical and Nihil ness Center Inc., which planned to operate a hospital, medical and nursing school, wellness center, and research center in Subic.

The other major projects approved were Hanshil Steel and Tube's $5-million gold mine project; Australian Walter Mining Corp.'s $2.53-million basic and marine-related products manufacturing; Pacific Rim Airways Aviation Schools $2.5 million aviation technical/vocational school project; Taiwan Cogeneration Corp.'s $2 million power plant; and Philippine Electric Dibergdil International Ltd.'s $1.94-million project involving importation of gaming equipment and operation of a slot machine arcade, and Grand Pillar International Development Inc.'s $1.9-million real estate venture.

Arreza said investments accounts for 90.74 percent of the total, with the bulk committed by foreign firms—41 projects worth $281.9 million.

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- Doosan Machine Tools — Horizontal Machine Center, CNC Lathe Machines
- Dasco — CNC Auto Lathe Machines
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Rusina bullish on RP project

By Ben T. Dichoso

AUSTRALIA-BASED MINING FIRM RUSINA Mining N.L.'s chief executive is optimistic that his core mining operations remain viable in the Philippines, including its nickel project in Zambales.

"The key is mining is low cost. That's where the Philippines has an advantage—in, quality, low-cost projects," company CEO Robert G. Gregory said in an interview.

As for his company's Anoje nickel project in Zambales, Gregory said it would likely be profitable despite tight credit conditions and lower nickel prices at the moment.

For one, he said, the proprietary heap leach process—a mining process where nickel is chemically separated from crushed and mined ores—by Rusina's technology partner European Nickel PLC "is very cost-effective."

Another positive sign for the project is that it would not need financing until around 2010, which is when economic recovery is expected to have improved. Full production is targeted to start in 2012, when nickel prices are expected to have recovered.

"Most analysts put long-term nickel prices at between $6 to $7 per pound. It's currently about $4 or $5 per pound," he said.

In the meantime, Gregory said, the pre-feasibility study for Anoje was completed and it "showed a positive net value even with suppressed nickel prices."

"Were now proceeding with the bill feasibility study. We expect that will be finished by the end of 2009. It should be very positive," he said.

Strategic partner European Nickel PLC will spend $18 million for the full feasibility study, Gregory said. Anoje's metal deposits in open cut were estimated at $400 million, including infrastructure and working capital.

Of the $400 million in total development cost, 70 percent will be spent in the Philippines.

Rusina Mining said the potential development and commercial mining operation at Anoje would have a positive economic impact on Candelaria and the surrounding areas since about half of the construction costs would be spent within the area.

The pre-feasibility study found that the Anoje nickel project in Zambales has a deposit of 34.4 million metric tons of nickel ore, with 1.09 percent nickel grade. The mine can produce 24,000 metric tons of nickel ore daily for a decade.

Power supply woes threaten Palawan tourism

PALAWANIS SEE FOR A BIG gap dead of the tourism market may suffer a major setback due to a power supply issue that has been hounding the province and its capital, Puerto Princesa City, for the past two years.

The concern was aired by business leaders who were also alarmed over the "inaction of those concerned" on the power supply problem which undermines efforts to promote the province as an important investment and tourist destination."

The business leaders have urged Palawan representatives elsewhere Mines and Industry Authority to "consider the urgency of the power situation" in Palawan.

They also asked Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn to make good his warning to hold Palawan Electric Cooperative accountable for the mounting power supply problem in the province if it fails to put a stop to the brownouts by this month.

Palawan residents and business leaders have been complaining about the unreliability of the power distribution services provided by Pelenco, saying the current state of service "would prove to be a major disincentive to the province in the domestic and international tourism community."

In the meantime, Mayor Hagedorn, former president of the Palawan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, president of the Palawan Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and the businessmen that had been going on for the past two years, would be a major destination in Southeast and Eastern Asia might seem to invest in or visit the province.

Tan said the Palawan business community "is worried that no clear solution and no visible action have been set in place to address the problem."

The business leaders also warned that "Bruger pointing between the power generators and the distributor will not help solve the worsening power crisis in Palawan."

They said National Power Corp. officials had assured the Palawan business community that there was enough power supply for the province, saying that there was even a 5-megawatt surplus. If this is true, this means the problem is in the distribution.

Napocor supplies 46 megawatts of power to the province. The power comes from three independent producers: Palawan Power, Agtech and Delta P.

Gov't to tap $300-M ADB loan

By Michelle V. Rosco

THE GOVERNMENT IS ALL SET TO borrow $300 million from the Asian Development Bank to finance programs intended to address weaknesses in the country's justice system.

This developed after the policy-making Monetary Board approved in its last meeting the government's plan to tap an e-ready financing from the ADB this year. The board agreed that reforms were badly needed to improve the delivery of justice in the country.

Bangko Sentral Deputy Governor Armando Serafin said the Monetary Board saw no problem in the government's plan to borrow $300 million from the ADB. He said it agreed that government had the capacity to pay and that the amount would not adversely affect the country's debt position.

One of the BSP's roles is to ensure that borrowings made by the government will not result in levels deemed unsupportable.

The BSP also has to make sure that the inflow of foreign loans will neither pose substantial threat to the peso nor lead to a sharp rise in liquidity in the system.

The ADB loan is earmarked for the implementation of the Government in Justice Sector Reform Program. It is set to improve the technological, human and other resources of government agencies under the judiciary branch of government.

The foreign lender, which has already approved the loan proposal, said improving the justice system was one of the core pillars of its policy-based development lending reforms for the Philippines. The other two are improvement of the government's fiscal standing and enhancement of its budget management.

The ADB also has to make sure that the country's justice system is efficient, accessible and fair to all.

"Inefficiencies in the justice system have contributed to the country's poor investment climate, and a lack of financial resources that have constrained expenditures and capacities," the ADB said in a paper on the CLRDP. "This ultimately results in poor public service delivery," it added.

The ADB loan will carry an interest rate equivalent to the US dollar-libor plus 20 basis points per year. The loan is payable in 15 years, inclusive of a three-year grace period.

The BSP said the loan from the ADB would also help beef up the country's dollar reserves.

It said foreign borrowings would be helpful in this case where the country needs to cushion the impact on the gross international reserves of the heavy withdrawals of foreign investments due to the global crisis.

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ALIVE

Japanese agri firm readies RP investment

By Abigail L. Ho

A JAPANESE COMPANY engaged in agribusiness is looking to investing in the country, a vote of confidence from Japanese firms that the Philippines is still a viable investment destination.

Coming from an economic mission in Tokyo last week, Trade Secretary Peter Wells said the Japanese agribusiness company, which he declined to name, was already conducting studies on its possible investment here.

Generally, he said Japanese corporations considered the Philippines a viable investment site, due mainly to relatively low operating costs and its pool of skilled and "loyal" workers.

He said many of these companies believed the country was a "better bet" compared to other potential investment locations in the region.

"The Japanese companies are talked to say: well we're the first to go out of our way to tell them that 'we're here, looking out for our foreign investors,'" he said.

"The (Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement) has also helped a lot. It's coming glorious its economic cooperation, and we should take advantage of it," he added.

During the economic mission, he said the team—composed of Subic, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Economic Planning Secretary Ralph Recto and Central Bank Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.—also delivered to Japanese Secretary President Arroyo's message that they were in good hands in the Philippines.

"We place emphasis now on how we can prepare ourselves for the upswing, prepare for when the economy recovers. There's a new administration in the US, and we're standing and waiting for how that will affect us and the rest of the world," he added.

HR firm sets up training site

HUMAN RESOURCE company Interlink will be setting up a recruitment and training site within the Eastwood City Cyberpark in Quezon City to enable business process outsourcing firms in the area to get the qualified employees they need.

The site at the 1-Commerce Plaza in Eastwood City would begin operating by March.

Jericho Go, vice president of Eastwood City Development Corp., said the establishment of Interlink's new team very timely as most of the BPO locators in the area had already reached critical mass.

"BPO and Information technology-related industries need to refresh, replenish and retain talent to continue to drive growth and competitiveness in their industry," he said in a statement.

He added that more than half of the around 60 companies operating within Eastwood belong in the BPO and IT sectors. These firms, as well as potential locators, had been asking for help in getting qualified personnel for their operations.

"We noticed that 30-40 percent of the available workforce for the BPO and IT businesses are classified as non-hires. Interlink has consciously chosen that it is equipped with the expertise to hire qualified applicants, as well as train trainers in preparation for a BPO or IT locators' arrival," he added. /Abigail L. Ho

GREEN BANK, INC. WINS TWO BALIKAT NG BAYAN AWARDS

For the seventh (7th) consecutive year, Green Bank, Inc. has been recognized by the Social Security System (SSS) as the "BEST COLLECTING RURAL BANK" in the Philippines and likewise recognized as the "BEST PAYING RURAL BANK" for the sixth (6th) straight year.

The two awards were given during the 15th Balikat ng Bayan Awarding Ceremony held at the Ramon Magsaysay Hall, SSS Building, Quezon City.

"The plaques of recognition were received by Green Bank, Inc. Board Member Wilhelm O. Antoye as shown in the photograph together with SSS President and CEO Romulo L. Neri (3rd from right), DOH Secretary Francisco T. Duque III (to his left) and SSS Chairman Thelma Y. Cunanan (2nd from left).

Green Bank has over 130 branches and banking offices spread all over the Philippine countryside. Its microfinance operations has uplifted the lives of hundreds of micro-entrepreneurs, farmers and fisher-folks.

The bank is also a recipient of numerous national awards like the Land Bank of the Philippines Hall of Fame award, the Bureau of Internal Revenue Centennial Year awards which ranked the Bank No.28 of the Top 1,000 Centennial Taxpayers, and the EAGLES award of the Microenterprise Access to Banking Services which the bank won for 3 consecutive years as recognition of the bank's excellence performance in microfinance.

Green Bank has also received international recognition from the Microfinance Information Exchange (MIX), a Washington based not for profit organization as No. 23 of the top 100 ranking of microfinance institution in the 2007 MIX Global 100, and No. 11 of the top 100 microfinance institution in Asia in be list of the most outreach.

Such achievement is aligned with its vision to become the preminent country side financial institution in the Philippines.

Filinvest to issue ₱3B worth of 5-year notes

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE DIVERSIFIED FILINVEST DEVELOPMENT Corp. has launched an offering of up to ₱3 billion worth of five-year, fixed-rate corporate notes to raise funds for its expansion projects.

FDC chair Jonathan Goulimis said the building company of the Filinvest group of companies recently conducted a road show for investors, targeting to raise ₱2 to ₱3 billion from the sale of these corporate notes.

British bank HSBC is the lead arranger of FDC's offering, which is targeted for closing within the next few months.

"It's for the requirements of our businesses," Goulimis said in an interview at the sidelines of the signing of the group's deal with the American International Group to purchase the latter's Philippine consumer finance units.

While FDC's core business is real estate development, it is also engaged in leasing, investing and managing activities, banking, supermarket, hotel, trading and sugar trading. Over the years, there has been a steady increase in contribution from its commercial banking unit Bank First Bank.

Goulimis said the road show for the offering of corporate notes was held the other Friday—a week before Filinvest Bank signed the deal to buy MG Philam Savings Bank and AIG Philam Asset Finance (formerly Philam Finance and Leasing Inc.).

During the briefing on Friday, it was also announced that FDC had agreed to infuse ₱2 billion in additional core or tier 1 capital into East West Bank, which is being groomed to be a major banking player in the country.

Goulimis said the group would not hold for the rest of AIG's assets in the country because it did not have an interest in insurance.

Asked about his outlook on the property sector given the global financial turbulence and economic slowdown, Goulimis said, "There will be some slowdown but it's not going to be negative." He mentioned options on opportunities in affordable and middle-class property development.

Moody's withdraws credit rating on URC

GLOBAL CREDIT WATCHDOG Moody's withdrawn its local currency rating on the the Gokongwei Universal Robina Corp, as well as the rating on its guaranteed bonds, thereby affecting its assessment on about ₱200 billion worth of debt securities.

"URC's normally unsecured retail bonds [which] were rated Ba2/positive/ [NP] obtained a relatively stable operating performance. But at the same time, they revealed a year-on-year reduction in bond issues and increased short-term borrowings," Moody's said in a statement from Hong Kong.

"The Moody's view, there is a lack of timely publicly disclosed information on the composition and quality of the company's sizeable liquid investments or its banking arrangements to enable a conclusive assessment of its liquidity strength, and hence the appropriateness of the ratings," it added.

Asked about Moody's withdrawal of its ratings, URC senior vice president BJ Sebastian said the company is happy. "We have actually been out of the ratings system for several years now. The bond tabulo we had issued by them was the URC 08 bond, which we had already redeemed, which is the reason we got out of the ratings system. Before that, we gave them some information that was in addition to what we disclosed to the SEC. At any rate, a careful look at our 17-A disclosure report will show the required information."

Before the recall, Moody's investor services gave a rating of Ba2 on URC's local currency corporate family rating and Ba2 on senior unsecured bonds guaranteed by URC. The last rating action with respect to URC was taken in January last year, when the outlook on its guaranteed senior unsecured bonds, issued by URC Philippines Ltd., was changed to "positive" from "stable because of a change in the Philippine foreign currency ceiling.

Under Moody's definitions, ultipositive ratings are judged to have speculative elements.

URC recently reported a 99-percent decline in consolidated income for fiscal year ending September 2008 partly due to mark-to-market losses from bond holdings. *Boris C. Bonifacio*

Group signs Meralco purchase deal with GFIs

From page B1

agencies enforce regional adjudicator order citing a Supreme Court ruling that had nothing to do with the case.

But while Global 5000 was unable to take over Landbank's shares for now, the execution of the deal with the EDC and DBP was seen sufficient to help San Miguel's shares lose respectable in the Monday trade and in the utility's senior management.

Four San Miguel top executives are set to be nominated to the board of Meralco today—company chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., vice chair Ramon Ang and directors Emilio Mendoza, and financial consultant Aurora Calderon.

Sources privy to San Miguel's affairs claimed that the new board conglomerate was crafted to "fire some out of Meralco's 11-member board, while the Lopez Group controls six board seats.

Out of the 11 board seats, two are occupied by independent directors—former Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban and Vicente Paulino, documents from the Philippine Stock Exchange showed.

Cojuangco and Mendoza will be nominated as directors with Eduardo Lopez to be retained as chair and chief executive, industry sources said.

Apart from the boardroom reinforcement of San Miguel's entry in Meralco, there are expectations in the market that San Miguel may install its nominees in at least two powerful management positions in Meralco—the chief finance officer and chief operations officer, sources said.

The Lopez clan, which has controlled Meralco for decades, holds about 24 percent to the power distributor.

Under the deal signed in early December, Global 5000 has agreed to pay about ₱30 billion for the combined SIIC, DBP and Landbank block in installments until January 2012. As such, the shares will not be crossed at the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) halt payment, but Global 5000 will have immediate control of the proxy votes. This was perceived after the homework used by San Miguel in taking over the GFIS' stake.

Analysts believe that while San Miguel does not own shares in Global 5000, it is closely associated with shareholders of the investment group. Ezbel has been a director of San Miguel since May 1999 and a key member of the company's key committees. He is also an independent director of San Miguel Brewery Inc., Ginebra San Miguel Inc., San Miguel Pure Foods Co. Inc. and San Miguel Properties Inc.

San Miguel president Ramon Ang is a director of Digaini's listed footwear venture Philwebb Corp.

Cancio, on the other hand, has been a joint venture partner of San Miguel before the conglomerate sold his stake in electricity stake in PhilAsia San Miguel Holdings Ltd. Inc., which was formed to own Oil Basin Pacific Ltd., in Caspian Norwegian group.

Listless trading seen

From page B1

cions for the payment of the extension of its option to buy a controlling stake in Petron Corp.

Globally, investors are also closely watching how US President Barack Obama would move to address the current global crisis.

"At the end of the day, there is still a host of variables that lend uncertainty to even the near-term prospects. The fundamentals are still poor; many are proposing a further deterioration. As long as these persist, investors will remain hesitant to increase their risk profiles by buying into equities," said Justine Calayeray Jr., dealer at stock brokerage Network Capital Equities Corp.

"The 'nationals' of the subprime is deep and it will take a while to heal. Nevertheless, the Bush (and markets, I believe are in) meeting for details of the Obama plan that will signal the return of confidence not only in equities but in drawing a more dependable direction for global economic recovery," he said.

Last week, the PSEi fell by another 4.8 percent to close at 1,407.34. The week ago, it lost 1.8 percent. *Interaksi, Doris Dumlao*

MONDAY JANUARY

BUSINESS

INFOTECH

FANCY CRYSTAL-STUDDED DEVICES

Atom-powered PCs with a touch of glam

By Raquel R Gomez

TAIWAN TECH giant Asus blasted the netbook and nettop market until in 2007 when it launched the Eee PC netbook and the Eee Top.

Today, it again pushes the envelope by launching two new additions to its Eee product line—a glamorized netbook called Eee PC S101 and a 15-inch touch-screen all-in-one nettop called Eee Top ET15i.

Leon Yu, Asus Philippines country manager, said the new "flagship" products run on the latest Atom N270 processor, similar to other brands of netbooks and nettops in the market today. However, the look and feel of the new PCs have been extensively improved, designed to cater to a discriminating market that demands more from a netbook or nettop.

For example the Eee PC S101, which still has the 10.2-inch display typical of a netbook, boasts of a thin ergonomic design and comes in luxurious colors of champagne, coal and graphite.

In addition, Asus-exclusive crystal-studded chiclet keyboards, while touched metal aluminum materials make up the palm rest and multi-touch pad. Also, the keyboard is now bigger—almost full-size—for easier comfort in typing.

Similar to the Eee PC 1000 released in 2008, the S101 features the Asus super hybrid engine (SHE) that allows the user to choose power settings to prolong use of the polymer battery to five hours.

It already supports the Wi-Fi 802.11 n draft for high speed Internet access and Bluetooth V2.0. It also features sturdy proof solid state drive (available in choices of 16-GB, 32 GB, and 64 GB) and an extra 30 GB encrypted Internet storage provided by the Asus website, which is good for access and sharing of data anywhere and anytime. Its flash card reader can read SMC, SD, Memory Stick, and MS-PRO. The only drawback to this stunning netbook is its 0.3 megapixel web camera.

Asus has also integrated a high-end human-like UI expanded nettop—the Eee Top ET16i. The all-in-one PC features a touchscreen display that allows users to scribble memos or notes with a stylus or a finger. Programs or applications behind the icons onscreen get activated with just a touch. Images can also be swiped or cropped.

The Eee Top ET15i targets children or other family members who would want a PC they could take right away. At an all-in-one PC and wireless device, cables are reduced to a minimum.

The Eee Top ET15i offers many setup options via "tap" applications in the Easy Mode setup. It has software with touch-enabled icons running on Windows XP.

Preinstalled applications include Eee Memo (for scribbling notes onscreen), softdya (for typing on a virtual keyboard), Opera Touch (for surfing the Internet), Stardock Window and Spreadsheet (word and spreadsheet apps compatible with Microsoft Office), and Eee Gnome (a full-featured multi-media center for photos, videos, music and movies that can be played or opened with a touch).

As a multimedia PC, the Eee Top ET16-20s (ET16i model) is outfitted with an ATI Mobility Radeon HD3450 graphics accelerator, enabling the system to run graphically intensive 3D applications and games.

Also, this nettop has integrated hi-fi speakers and SRS Trubasound HD technology, LAN port, Wi-Fi 802.11n, four USB ports and card-reader, 160 GB hard disk drive (HDD), plus embedded battery (for the ET2403 model).

The re-designed Asus Atom powered PCs carry a hefty tag. Targeting the fashionistas, the Eee PC S121 is priced at P34,900. The family-oriented Eee Top ET15i may go for P32,800.

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HP answers prayers of the cash-strapped

DESKJET F735

BY RECENT WORD, the cost of consumer and office printers has been going down, but the price of consumables, or ink cartridges that go with the printers, has hardly seen any drop, forcing many users to lose their grands to refilled ink cartridges.

In searching out to a budget-conscious market, HP has unveiled two printers that not only tout HP ink cartridge prices as significantly lower.

The Deskjet Ink Advantage F735 All-in-One and the refreshed Deskjet D5160 both use the HP 703 ink cartridge that is priced at only P599 each for black (300 page yield) and tri-color cartridge (200 page yield).

The price, according to HP officials, is just about a third of the price of ink cartridges of other printer brands.

Using "all-in-low-cost ink," the new Deskjets are designed for individuals, small offices and home offices (SOHO) that "want to combine low operating costs with productivity," according to Jerry Ty, HP consumer marketing and business manager for imaging and printing group.

The small-footprint Deskjet Ink Advantage F735, which retails at P6,999, is a multifunctional device that offers printing, scanning and copying of documents and photos.

It can print and copy up to 20 pages per minute in black and 22 pages per minute in color. Scanning capability is up to 1,200 x 2,900 dpi scan resolution.

It also features a "dual-drop volume" technology that delivers small ink drops for more detailed borderless graphics printout (up to 4,800 x 1,200 dpi).

The compact and energy efficient Deskjet F735, priced at P6,999, can print 20 pages per minute for black printouts and 14 pages per minute for color printouts at 4,800 x 1,200 optimized dpi resolution. Raquel R Gomez

DESKJET D5160

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BUSINESS Monday
Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

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How to get your life back on track when banks, preneed firms fold

Prepare complete documents before filing claims

By Ma. Sabin Chaliño
Inquirer net

THE LOW-GRADE fear of bank and other corporate failures that spread slowly last year has turned to reality for many who have been victimized recently by the record closure of rural banks and worries that the preneed industry is on the brink of disaster.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has said P13.6 billion worth of deposits are virtually frozen inside the 26 rural banks padlocked last year.

That's a big amount of money as a time people are losing their jobs.

Real fear

"There's real fear among the people right now," says Alvin Tabuñag, a registered financial planner and author of "Kaya Mo, Pinoy! 12 Steps to Build Wealth On Any Income."

The timing couldn't be tougher. Fortunately, all is not lost.

When a bank is closed by the central bank, it is normally turned over to the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., which then examines the bank's records to determine which deposits are insured. You can still get your money back—or at least some of it—if you know what to do.

Practical guide

Here's a guide on how to get your life back after bank or preneed failures:

1. Bring proper identification. Both the PDIC and the Securities and Exchange Commission, the state regulator of preneed companies, say most delays are caused by lack of proper identification documents.

Some depositors bring ATM cards, credit cards, or membership cards in clubs to prove their identity. Cut the processing time by bringing any two of the following: Social Security System or Government Service Insurance System cards, Professional Regulation Commission license, driver's license, senior citizen's card, passport, company or school identification card, Taxpayer's Identification Number card, a PhilHealth card, and a voter's identification card or affidavit.

If you are filing a claim on insured deposits in behalf of someone else, you need to bring the same documents, plus a special power of attorney (SPA). If the owner of the account is abroad, the Philippine consul where he lives must authenticate the SPA.

2. Bring evidence of your deposits or preneed policy. These include savings passbooks, certificates of time deposits, ATM cards, unused checks and bank statement, and other relevant documents. The PDIC will be double-checking the consistency of your signatures.

When claiming against preneed companies, bring a copy of the plan contract, the certificate of full payment, or official receipts of your payments on file, if the plan is not yet fully paid. In the case of plan holders of Legacy Consolidated Plans Inc., Scholarship Plan Phils. Inc., and All Asia Plans Corp., which have recently closed, you need to file a sworn complaint on or before March 31.

Documents

Sources who asked not to be identified say many of the documents turned in these firms did not have signatures and appear to be spurious. Take a look at your documents and show them to a lawyer who specializes in financial transactions, if you think their legitimacy will be questioned.

"Taking it actually free compared with the money you stand to lose," says Atty. Carlo Cariño, senior partner at the Cariño and Mohidar Law Office.

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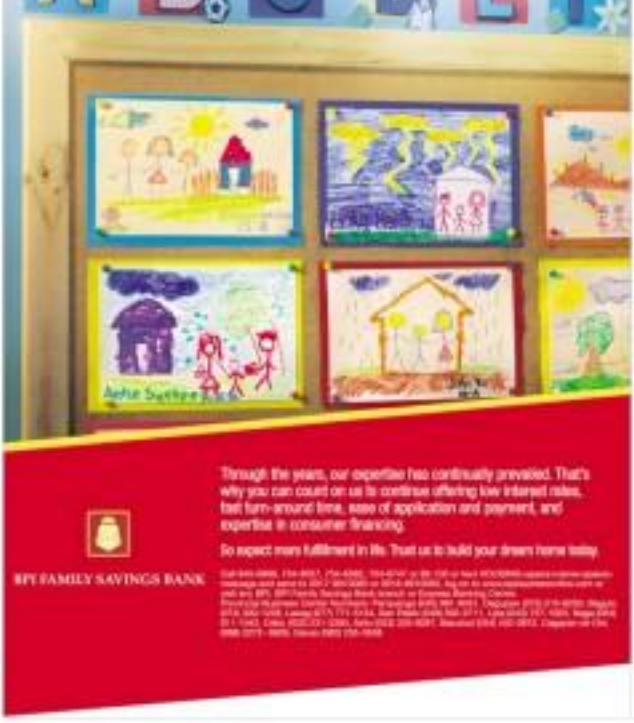
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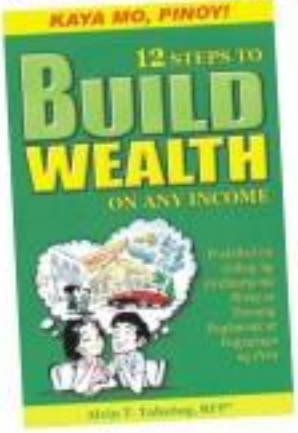

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Editor Aries Espinosa

BOC, Honda destroy counterfeit products

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS, IN COOPERATION with Honda Motor Co Ltd and Honda Philippines Inc, held a ceremonial destruction of counterfeit power products at the Bureau of Customs grounds last Dec. 16. The activity was part of the implementation of BOC's border control program which ensures decent importation of bike products in the country.

The counterfeit Honda power products, estimated at P26,920,000 worth of gasoline engines, gasoline engines with water pump, generator sets, gasoline machine engines, water pump engines, piston rings, fuel tanks, bar cams, carburetors, and starters, were part of the estimated 1,811 units seized last year, of which 716 were ordered for destruction by the BOC. The destruction of the said units was held at San Rafael, Bulacan simultaneously with the ceremony.

"Through this activity, we would like to inform the public of the progress of our initiatives in making our economy counterfeit-free. Step by step, through partnerships such as this, we will be able to achieve our goal to fully put a stop on the importation of counterfeit products," said Commissioner Napoleon L. Morales.

The destruction also served as the bureau's public warning against the dangers of using counterfeit products. According to the Commissioner, the use of counterfeits causes not just loss of revenue but more importantly, this may also pose a great danger to public health and safety.

According to the report of the bureau's Intellectual Property Unit, BOC has conducted a total of 138 seizures of various counterfeit products with a total estimated value of P2,921,23[illegible] from 2005 to November 2008. With the institutionalization of the National Committee for Intellectual Property Rights (NCIPR), the Bureau believes that their border control program will be in full swing next year.

Morales is encouraging other private companies to follow the actions of Honda and avail of the IPR recordation program of the BOC for their copyrights and trademarks, which serves as a continuing complaint against any and all counterfeit and infringing goods, allowing the BOC to seize such goods without prior formal complaint lodged by the IP owners against the shipment.

"We can not do this alone. We have to have partners to be able to fully implement this program. If private companies like Honda Motor Co Ltd and Honda Philippines Inc will be actively involved in going after the infringers, we will be able to stop counterfeiting at the gateways," Morales pointed out.

Honda is the market leader in general purpose engines because of its reputation for manufacturing products of superior quality, as gathered from reports of the Agricultural Machineries Manufacturers and Distributors Association (Amada), which is an association of general purpose engine dealers in the Philippines. Because of this, counterfeit Honda power engines proliferated in the Philippines as early as 2002. With the help of the border control program of the BOC, the company was able to strengthen and fully implement its own anti-counterfeiting program.

TOYOTA AWARDS OUTSTANDING TEAM MEMBERS

Toyota Motor Philippines Corp (TMP) presented recently the winners of the 2008 Most Outstanding Leaders and Team Members (MOLT) awards who were chosen for their exceptional performance for the areas of productivity, quality, safety, cost efficiency, continuous improvement of results and for being exemplary models of good attitude and character. The MOLT awardees are (from 3rd left) Salvador Dauplaix Jr. and his wife Ashton, Clara Camille Dimalo, Fernimar Marcaida, Edgardo Bacsa, Nemesio Ishiro Santos, Jeffrey Mallorca, and Anacleto Sarmiento Bautista. The winners were awarded by TMP president Hiroyuki Ito (2nd from left), senior executive vice president Dr. Emerlito Salas (left), TMP Labor Management Council (LMC) chair Erwin Velasco (3rd from right), TMP LMC co-chair and TMP Supervisory Union president Angel Dimalanta (2nd from right), and TMP Labor Organization president Wilson Lorenzo.

FEU HS '84 grand reunion

ALL MEMBERS OF the Far Eastern University High School batch 1984 are invited to the grand reunion this July. Relive and reminisce the '80s with high school friends. Exciting activities are lined up as we celebrate our silver anniversary. For details, call Rachelle at 2915-2150/440-0 Loc 2827-3488827, or log on to www.feuhs1984.com.

MEGAWORLD NAMED TOP QUEZON CITY CORPORATE TAXPAYER

Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte (center) presents Megaworld Corp commercial division head Kevin Tan (2nd from left) a plaque recognizing the company as a private top payer in the real property category for the year 2008 in 2009, as it ties with Quezon City Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista. Megaworld VP and treasurer Francisco Camus and Quezon City Treasurer Victor Hortiguela look on. Fundwood City Cyberpark in Libis, Quezon City, remains a priority project of Megaworld Corp. The country's number one residential condominium and township developer.

1st World Congress on liposuction, bariatric surgery set March 6

THE PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF LIPOSUCTION Surgery Inc (PSLS), in cooperation with the Philippine Society for Cosmetic Surgery (PSCS), Philippine Academy of Dermatologic Surgery Foundation Inc (PADS) and the Philippine Academy of Aesthetic and Reparative Surgery (Pares) will be hosting the World Congress on "Advances in Body Contouring" surgical and non-surgical approaches with live demonstrations slated from March 6 to 8 at the Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila. The congress will feature world renowned experts discussing interesting topics on liposuction, modern instrumentation for advanced liposuction techniques, bariatric surgery, lower body contouring, fat transfer, common surgical methods, alternative medicine, nutrition and physical fitness. One of the primary speakers is Dr. Pierre Fournier who is known as the father of liposuction surgery from Paris, France. Other lecturers are all leading cosmetic, plastic and bariatric surgeons coming from the United States, Australia, Japan, Colombia, Korea, Greece, Indonesia, China and Philippines. One of its highlights will be the live surgical demonstration to be held at the Philippine Lung Center on March 8 which will provide the participants a more immersive learning experience.

DONAYON Dolores Jose MD, president of the Philippine Society of Liposuction Surgery Inc, are board certified cosmetic plastic surgeons.

An early bird discounted registration fee of P8,000 is offered to members (PSLS, PSCS, PADS, Pares), P10,000 for non-members for the aforementioned fee, while starting and 15,000 for the live demonstration (those who register on or before Jan. 31, 2009). Regular fee will be P18,000 for members, P12,000 for non-members for the scientific meeting and 27,000 for the live surgical demonstration. Membership applications to the Philippine Society for Liposuction Surgery are now being accepted. For more information, inquiries and payment online, log on to www.liposuction-phil.com. For further inquiries, call 557-1007 Events Management at 386-0955; 7816xx 819-2965, 389-2868 or 0917-3444651.

Royal Brunei Airlines lowers fuel surcharge

ROYAL BRUNEI AIRLINES IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE that it will lower fuel surcharges to most of its destinations. The reduced surcharges apply to all tickets issued from Jan. 1, 2009 onwards for journeys out of Manila. With the drop in oil prices RBA is able to cut our fuel surcharges up to 10 percent and pass along a significant saving to our passengers," said senior vice president commercial sales and marketing Wong Peng Hoon. Following is the updated list of surcharges from Manila: Manila to Bandar Seri Begawan—$25 per sector; Borneo—$40 per sector; regional—$60 per sector; Bandar Seri Begawan to Dubai—$95 per sector; Bandar Seri Begawan to Jeddah—$80 per sector; Bandar Seri Begawan to Perth and Brisbane—$85 per sector; Dubai to London—$80 per sector; Dubai Long Haul—$120 per sector. The reduction follows the recent sustained decrease in the price of crude oil. Should the price of jet fuel continue to drop and maintain a lower average, Royal Brunei Airlines will further review the surcharges as applicable.

St. Theresa's College QC '84 silver homecoming Jan. 31

ABOARD THE ST. THERESA'S COLLEGE QUEZON City, this year's Silver Jubilarians, in cooperation with the STCGC Alumnae Association, will be hosting the Grand Alumni Homecoming at all Theresians on Jan. 31 at the STCGC High School grounds. Registration starts at 3 p.m., followed by an anticipated mass at 4 p.m. at the Studio School Chapel, to be officiated by Fr. Cesar Martin SJ, Theresa Priest of Mary the Queen Parish. Early dinner will be served before the program starts at 6 p.m. At the end of the '80s, this year's theme revolves around the latest craze during that time from the hit songs ("Sweetheart", "Just Get Lucky") to the colorful, "Bagets" outfits. Special guests Nanette Inventor of "Pantaloon Line", who immortalized the nonsense rhyme, smoky characters of Dolfa Building, and Jaja Major of the Tigers, who started the trend of small boys dance group, and recently the '80s hosting, www.stcgc84.org.ph is the official website of Batch '84. Cate Arguerion-Griffin, who is based in the United States, volunteered to put up the batch website. Batch '84 is the biggest high school batch ever to have graduated in STCGC. It is a merger of Grades 5 and 7 students, when Grade 7 was finally phased out in 1980. Depression for the event is OMO Homes. Major sponsors are Manila Gas Marita Sevilla, Magnolia, and Johnson's & Johnson's. All funds and donations raised by Batch '84 will go to STCGC's scholarship arm, the Sandayan Educational Foundation Inc. (SEF) fund, the STC Bawad Kalinga Village, and the ESM.

Psychiatrists address mental issues

BEING A JOURNALIST CAN GIVE MEDIA practitioners traumatic experiences. Apart from threats of assassination, the job also exposes one to a high risk of developing psychological disorders.

This was the literally alarm sounded by several psychiatrists Dr. Jose Dapaliyan Lopez during the '60s Annual Media Women of the Philippine Psychiatric Association (PPA) at Camp John Hay, Baguio City today.

Dubbed "Nerve Ins, Nerve Mind", the media forum is part of PPA's efforts to spread awareness on mental disorders and how to prevent them through public information campaigns. Dr. Lopez, Dean Lagman, the well-respected Filipino psychiatrists, Dr. Norma Pascual and Dame Ines Ishida joined the media forum.

Because of the nature of the profession, some journalists become prone to stress such as smoking, drinking alcohol and the use of prescription drugs such as tranquilizers to calm down. Some, Lopez advised, journalists to learn to manage their stress in a constructive manner.

Witnessing catastrophes and other horrible events such as crimes, massacres, war and other forms of violence impose a heavy emotional toll on journalists that may lead to potentially serious psychological disorders.

"In a country reported to be the third most dangerous place for journalists, we are at the risk of assassinations, the pressure may simply be too much for some journalists. The scenario is both physically and emotionally unhealthy for journalists, according to Lopez.

Pascual talked about the unfavorable impressions and common myths that Filipinos use to refer to mental illnesses and patients suffering from them. She noted a big improvement in the knowledge and attitude of Filipinos towards mental illness and the people around them, including family and friends. This improved education leads to early and proper treatment, said Pascual.

Ishida, who is based in Davao City discussed the psychological problems of children and adolescents. According to Ishida, they are in an emotionally problematic phase in their years before becoming an adult, and those adolescents tend to develop social problems such as low self-esteem personality, difficulty in problem-solving and decision-making, and tendency to become more aggressive.

Psychiatrists have a special 10-week program to address this difficult phase in an adolescent's life, said Ishida. The program gives special attention to the behavior of adolescents through sessions especially designed to help the youth cope and suppress aggression, a common problem among teenagers nowadays. Through this program is designed for teenagers 13 to 18 years old, Ishida said that they also cater to parents whose younger or older than the range with only some modifications in the program.

Family members, parents and other siblings are also involved in the program since they must be able to provide the vital emotional support system to the adolescent.

The media forum was sponsored by Otsuka Philippines which markets the drug Abilify in the country. Dr. Imelda Bautz, outgoing president of PPA, noted in the close of the forum that the PPA needs the media so they can disseminate the proper education through right information on mental health. She also stressed that media should help educate people that Filipinos can seek the help of psychiatrists even if they are not mentally ill.

Landbank invests P50M for mainframe storage disk upgrade project

LANDBANK OF THE PHILIPPINES (LBP) recently upgraded its mainframe storage disk to accommodate its rapidly increasing clientele that ranges from local government employees to overseas Filipino workers. The bank's clientele base currently contains over 2.8 million accounts with its newly forged joint ventures with foreign banks and several local government units.

The Mainframe Storage Disk Upgrade Project was done to meet the challenges of the aggressive customer-expansion programs that LBP has lined up for the next five years. With the ramp up of more customer centers spanning Asia, Europe, Australia and Middle East plus the intensified activities to provide services for payroll and benefits disbursements on bank LCU employees and their beneficiaries, the bank anticipates millions of customer information and transaction flow to maximize its IT storage systems.

"We have been very aggressive this year with our customer expansion programs. This is something that we will pursue earnestly in the coming years and we want our bank to be ready and well-able to handle the growth of data without choking up our IT infrastructure. One of our priorities was to upgrade our storage and we needed a service provider who can do the job in a timely manner. We are very happy with our decision to acquire the services of Intec Infotechnics Management (IIM) as they were able to deliver value we needed in a short amount of time," says SVP Alan V. Borreo, Landbank's IT head and CIO.

IIM scoped the system of TIM to replace the bank's existing mainframe storage system. The IT firm handled full implementation which included supply of hardware infrastructure as well as installation and integration of the new storage disk to the bank's existing storage system. The mainframe storage upgrade project, an undertaking which usually takes between three to six months to finish, was completed in just two weeks. According to LBP officials, the undertaking of the new disks will mean existing storage subsystem went through without any difficulty.

"We are truly honored that LBP chose us to be their partner in this storage disk upgrade project. This is the third time we have worked with them and we are happy to have been entrusted once again to furnish the bank with their IT requirements," says Jose Mari Intengan, president and CEO of IIM.

MCC's Tour de Burgos Feb. 1

THE MONTALBAN CYCLING CLUB (MCC), TOgether with the Sangguniang Kabataan of Barangay Burgos, invites everyone to join its 6th Tour de Burgos on Feb. 1. The Tour de Burgos is a yearly friendly bike race held by MCC in celebration of Barangay Burgos' fiesta. This year's race will be held in a race field in Barangay Burgos, Rodriguez (formerly Montalban), Rizal. Although a large part of the course will be on a dry public field, there will be some dirt and gravels. There will be four categories in contested in: Beginners, All Mtb, Class B and Class C. The course for beginners will be different (shorter) than for the categories Class B and Class C. Top three finishers in each category will be given cash and trophies. Fourth to tenth placers will be recognized with medals. Registration forms are available at Team Angelo Bike Shop (304-6894), 111 JP Rizal Avenue, Mangpatan, Rodriguez; Real Iron Mercury Drugs, and at Pilipo John Bike Shop (867-3607), 78-A Manila-Dasmariñas corner JP Rizal Avenue, Burgos, Rodriguez. Final deadline for registration will be done onsite, starting at 7 a.m. Registration fee is P400.

Philippine education: Beyond reform, beyond transformation

MAPping THE FUTURE
Nicanor S. Poblador

OVER THE PAST YEARS, there have been numerous attempts at "reforming" basic education in the Philippines.

These include proposals made by the 1991 Congressional Commission on Education (Bicam); the 2000 Presidential Commission on Education Reform (PCER); the 2008 Education for All (EFA) Assessment; the 2006 National Action Plan for Education for All; and the 2006 Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (Besra).

Private sector initiatives include programs launched by Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) and Philippine Business for Education (PBEd). Professional organizations such as the Philippine Association of the Philippine Islands (MAP) also have programs focused on educational reform.

Educational institutions, such as the Ateneo de Manila University and the University of the Philippines, have their own agendas for educational reform. Recognized scholars, such as former UP president Jose Abueva and UP sociologist Cynthia Bautista, also have come up with their own proposals.

There is general consensus that our educational system is in dire straits, and that it is not up to the daunting challenges of bringing our country into the New Millennium. There is widespread support for change.

There is no paucity of good ideas and sound proposals for making our educational system more effective in developing the country's intellectual capital in order to enhance global competitiveness. It's time to walk the talk.

But who will do the walking?

Ready for change?

For all the brilliant ideas that have been put forward in this, the responsible for it is that the responsibility for implementing reform projects rests with the three government agencies responsible for administering our educational system: The Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission for Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda).

Basic education is under the watch of the Department of Education (DepEd).

The question I pose is: Under present institutional arrangements, are we ready to put in place an effective change strategy for running our shared educational system forward?

No. Not at this time.

Sociologist Cynthia Bautista noted in her recent UP Centennial lecture that most reform proposals that had been put forward were essentially generic.

This poses a problem because, as a rule, entrenched government bureaucrats are loath to accept proposals for change, especially if they come from outside sources. Doing so is such an admission of inaptitude and an admission that they have not been doing a good job. This will not look good on their resumés.

This is not to say that DepEd has been totally remiss in efforts at rethinking basic education. For example, it has played a major role in the conceptualization of Besra, and will be its major implementing arm. It has been strongly anchored by the government, and is enthusiastically pushed by top DepEd officials, as well as by administrators in both public and private sectors.

Strong resistance

But we will be strongly resisted by the system, and is doomed to fail. Here's why:

- It will be strongly resisted by entrenched elements in the bureaucracy and by elements outside the system whose interests firmly lie on the status quo, implementing a change of such magnitude will jeopardize interests and endanger personal (i.e., financial) interests.
- Effective implementation will require empowering lower-level administrators and stakeholders within the community. While decentralization has many advantages, its downsides are easily overlooked, the one thing, it will exacerbate parochialism and turfism, which carry the danger that local issues and concerns will take precedence over the larger interests of society and of the community.
- Successful implementation requires extensive networking arrangements and joint, multi-sectoral decision-making. In the past, consultative arrangements and other forms of collaboration and cross effort have failed. There are many reasons for this:

1. Absence of a shared commitment to a common goal.

2. Conflicting individual interests.

3. Perceptions of inequity in the sharing of offices, costs and benefits.

4. Exaggerated self-assessment of competences (or lack of it).

5. Differences in norms and authority, which hinder meaningful debates and the free flow of information.

- Finally, the proposed change cannot be successfully carried out unless existing performance evaluation and compensation systems at DepEd are drastically revised. This is necessary to ensure that its bold and sophisticated plans are not left up enough to satisfy their own personal and professional interests. This is a tall order considering that the immediate interests of those are in the form of investment in intellectual capital, which is largely intangible and difficult to measure.

Final solutions

The DepEd is a most unlikely candidate for "transformation" in the Philippine bureaucracy.

In the many years that it has existed, it has subdivided into a bifurcated, monolithic and scandal-tainted institution in the classic Weberian mould. It has gone out of touch with the real world and has become largely irrelevant in today's knowledge-driven environment. Attempts at transforming such a system are likely to entail huge "vanishing costs" that society can ill afford.

Perhaps, just perhaps, the better strategy is to dismantle the present structure altogether, rebuild it from the ground up, and in contrary it (or smaller units) into a more vibrant and effective institution. Like General Macarthur, I shall return.

(This article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is an active academic and a knowledge management consultant. Feedback at mapp@globelines.com.ph. For previous articles, please visit mapp.org.ph)

MOVEMENTS

Chinatrust has new president

CHINATRUST (PHILIPPINES) COMMERCIAL Bank Corp. has named veteran Taiwanese banker Mark Chen as its new president effective Feb. 1.

Chen shall succeed veteran Filipino banker William Ibe, who will continue to hold his concurrent position as vice chair of the bank's board of directors, a position illustrated to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Prior to his appointment as president, Chen was executive vice president and chief banking operations officer of Chinatrust Philippines.

Chinatrust Philippines is a subsidiary of Chinatrust Commercial Bank (CTCB), the largest privately owned bank in the commercial bank of Taiwan, and one of the 300 largest banks in the world in terms of capital. **Doris C. Bersales**

GSK names managing director

GLAXOSMITHKLINE (GSK), A LEADING global research-based pharmaceutical company, has appointed Roberto C. Tabuada as the new President and Managing Director for its Philippine organization.

Previously with Abbott International Philippines as its General Manager, Roberto Tabuada succeeds Rick T. Gutierrez who recently appointed GSK's Asia Pacific Vice President for Commercial Development.

Tabuada has extensive international business experience in the pharmaceutical industry, demonstrating strong analytical and people management skills during his 16 years with the company's international divisions in Latin America/Canada and Hong Kong before moving to the Philippine affiliate in 2003.

Cisco promotes Hontschel

CISCO HAS PROMOTED CHRIST BEN Hontschel to managing director of Emerging Countries in Asia.

Reporting directly to Chris Hsing, president for Cisco in Asia, Chrisben is responsible for business operations for the company in Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

He was previously the Director for Commercial, Marketing and Channel Operations in Asia.

How to get your life back on track ...

From page B6-1

Now, you also need to provide the BSP with your complete and updated mailing address and contact numbers. Go to the Non-traditional Securities and Instruments Department of the BSP. In the Ortigas head office, their landline is 584-0508 and the department head is Ana Aquino.

3. **Continue paying your loan when PDIC sends you a letter.** You are not off the hook even if the bank you borrowed from closes. You may be slapped fees and finance charges if you don't maintain your good credit standing even in a closed bank.

4. **Collect insured peso checking deposits and amount automatic debit arrangements are met.** Those checks are no longer valid, so replace them or arrange to pay some other way.

Processing claims

5. Fill up three copies of a claim form from the PDIC and sign the "Signature of Depositor/Claimant over Printed Name" under the "To be accomplished by the Depositor/Claimant" portion in the claim form. Again, since the PDIC will be paying under the microscope is the integrity of the signature, making sure none are forged.

6. **If you are filing in person, go to either the branch of the closed bank where you deposited your money or another site designated by the PDIC, or the PDIC claims** counter located at PDIC Ayala Extension office, 555 Building, corner EA Rufino Street, (formerly Herrera Street), Makati City.

7. **You can also process your claim via mail through** this address:

The Assistant Vice President,
Claims Processing Department
Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.
2228 Chino Roces Avenue
1231 Makati City, Philippines

Some depositors get their insured deposits within an hour if the documents are prepared and the account is "clean." That means any loans payable to the bank and cases that need to be paid have already been deducted, and borrowers warned were already settled.

A "clean" account also means there are no questions about the legitimacy of the deposit. It is not subjected for further investigation with depositors to "explaining" accounts when they realize the bank is about to be closed. This hasn't been like depositors because the presence of split and fictitious accounts makes everyone jump through hoops to get their money.

Ancinar Caballero, head of corporate communications at the PDIC, says claimants are normally classified into three: "clean," "documentary deficient" and "for further verification." Only claimants with clean documentation will be paid within an hour or at least the same day.

If you belong to the second category, you may be asked to present more documents to prove you are the real owner of the account. If you belong to the third, claim agents will interview you and this is where the actual depositor needs to appear personally.

A depositor's relationship with a bank can get complicated. Aside from the usual savings, checking, and time deposit accounts, now there are cash investment trust funds and investment accounts. There are joint accounts, accounts held in trust, institutional accounts and joint accounts. Which of these are safe? And what if your account exceeds the insured amount of P250,000?

> You can still get your money back, or at least some of it, if you know what to do

Depositor convenience cannot be construed into risks of opening accounts in different branches in the same bank, perhaps not as a time deposit, one as a checking account, and another as a savings account, and expecting that each would be insured up to P250,000. This is a grave mistake because the PDIC will add up all your single accounts in a particular bank and apply the P250,000 limit to the total.

But if one of your accounts is a single depositor account, and another is a joint account with your husband, for example, your deposits will be insured separately from the joint account. The PDIC website again shows exactly how this is computed. Unit investment Trust Funds and investment accounts are not insured by the PDIC.

If your deposits exceed P250,000, you may still claim for the excess but you have to wait until the PDIC has filed with the liquidation court, has already disposed of the bank's assets, is ready to distribute those assets, and there is enough to go around many with peso-hoarded checks like the government in ordinary depositors—yes, there's one.

In the case of the Rural Bank of Pagbilao and other banks under the bankrupt Legacy group that were recently closed, the earliest date of claimants and claim time is much longer. PDIC has started payouts for small deposits (for those who have P10,000 and below) last Dec. 22. Those who have more than will have to wait until February. Claim forms are not yet available, as of this writing. Go to the PDIC website, one of the most helpful government websites, on how to follow up your requests. (http://www.pdic.gov.ph/index.php?mid=31)

Rebuilding savings

Tabuhog says too many Filipino savers are still lured by easy money, which is why many are caught by bank deals, save and come with their pants down. "Typical Pinoy. We want high returns quickly. We just want to sit back and wait. We find that it's easy at first, but today, it's not readily available for a short time," he says.

The Legacy case is another big Ponzi scheme, he says. "Banks don't have agents. The reason why Legacy's agents were very confident reportedly in recovering personal plans into time deposits is they are reporting the PDIC to bail them out. Their practices were really not sound," he adds.

Tabuhog advised depositors and plan holders of Legacy to file a class suit against the company. Can the says that the "more persuasive" plan holders can exert on government and the courts if the plan holders win their case, the owners may be personally liable to the people they defrauded.

The personal money management coach also said that apart from saving and praying, it is crucial now for depositors and plan holders to wise rebuilding their educational and retirement plans and investing again—this time, in centered way.

"There is no other way but to start to save more again. You can do this by increasing your income, spending less or living both. There are many ways Filipinos can do that," Tabuhog says.

"Forget the 3% (Louis Vuitton) bag for the moment. You can go for UCB in the meantime. That means United Coffee of Bachelor," he says.

(*For more personal finance articles, visit MoneySmarts at http://blogs.inquirer.net/moneysmarts.*)

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BUSINESS Monday

YEAR OF THE OX

Feng shui masters see calmer markets

HONG KONG—STOCK investors reeling from last year's market mayhem may take some solace from predictions of the auspicious Chinese ear of feng shui, who's provided a cautious, if subdued, performance for the coming Chinese Year of the Ox.

"This year of the Ox is an 'earth' year, when people will take a breather and reflect on what they should do after a turbulent 2008," said Hong Kong feng shui master Raymond Lo.

Five elements

Practitioners of feng shui maximize the universe is made up of five elements—earth, water, fire, wood and metal—that define the collective mood in the environment.

Earth is the calmest of the elements and this year is a "yin earth" year as well as an Ox year, symbolizing a more frustrating energy type.

The Year of the Ox, which starts today, will be the most powerful year globally since 2008, he says, but stock investors don't need to rush into the market yet.

"2009 will be a 'yang earth' year, which means the will be pinning up there will not be a lot of drive to push up the stock market," said Lo.

The economic climate will still be tough and though stock markets might rise in the first half of this year, gains could prove sour in the second half, Lo said.

OFFICE workers chat in front of a decoration to mark the coming of the Year of the Ox at Hong Kong's Financial Central district. Stock movements are expected to be calmer this year. AFP/FILE

"The market should still be quite low in the second half and there would be a good time to get in ahead of a recovery in 2010 [the Year of the Tiger]," he said.

The global outlook will be helped by the fact that incoming US President Barack Obama was born in a "yin earth" year, like President Abraham Lincoln, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou are also "yin earth" people.

"This is a new generation of leaders. They are more calm, humane and considerate," Lo said.

Leonardo de Vasi, Malvinas gets, Charles Darwin, Tchaikovsky and Sigmund Freud, were all born in "yin earth" years which symbolize harmony and a move to a new order.

The last "yin earth" year of the Ox, in 1949, saw the birth of Nepal and the People's Republic of China.

Mixed record

Hooster Goh of the Singapore Feng Shui Center agrees that financial markets will be subdued.

"Don't pick high-risk stocks this year, be patient and don't expect high returns," Goh said.

The global economy could start to pick up in the second half of 2009, says Goh, who sees busy mergers and acquisitions activity, but adds that banks will continue to be reluctant to lend.

A report this month by Japanese research company Daiwa Institute, however, warned that Ox years are usually disastrous for stocks, and Japan's Nikkei stock index has fallen by an average 11.4 percent in each of the past five Years of the Ox.

Feng shui masters have a mixed record when it comes to market predictions.

So forecast a stock market recession a year ago but also advised investors to put their money into property.

FENG Shui experts say the earth element dominates the Year of the Ox, which should take root and quickly turn around from the current economic malaise. AP

Prof. Charlie Chan, a leading feng shui expert in the Philippines, was quoted in a CLSA research note a year ago as warning of a possible global economic crisis in 2008.

But he also forecast a better performance for the Philippine stock markets. That didn't happen. Manila stocks slumped 48 percent last year, extending a 21 percent gain in 2007.

Great faith

Chinese emperors put great faith in advice from feng shui masters as do many business tycoons and politicians in Chinese societies today.

Apartment blocks and office buildings as well as furniture are often positioned according to feng shui principles to generate "wealth."

Banking giant HSBC's Hong Kong headquarters was built in accordance with feng shui guidelines and Hong Kong Disneyland changed the angle of its main entrance after consulting a feng shui expert.

As fewer people buy property or start businesses during the economic downturn, Michael Teo, a feng shui master at I-Ching Pengshui in investment-hit Singapore, is seeing a drop in business.

However, sales of auspicious feng shui jade carvings, which cost $1,000-$10,000 and are believed to bring wealth, are being snapped up every day, he says.

Koh compares feng shui with a reliable weather forecast, saying it can help us anticipate changes in our environment.

"We cannot stop the rain, but knowing it is going to fall we can prevent ourselves from getting drenched," he says.

Natural disasters

But getting wet may be a minor concern in the Year of the Ox. While financial markets should be calmer, Koh foresees the spread of disease and a spate of natural disasters, particularly in the northern hemisphere, with landslides, floods and earthquakes to stress. Reuters

FEATURES IN BRIEF

BTr recognizes LBP

THE LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES (LANDBANK) WAS NAMED recently by the Bureau of Treasury as the country's Best Performing Government Securities and Exchange Dealer (GSED) in the secondary market for 2008.

Landbank also bagged the second place in the combined primary and secondary markets and third place in the primary markets award, respectively.

In 2007, Landbank was the first place awardee in "Best Performing GSED" in both the primary and secondary markets.

This was the result of its being the best performing dealer in the primary market and the second best performing dealer in the secondary market.

Deutsche Regis tops broker rankings

DEUTSCHE REGIS WAS AGAIN SEEN FAMILIAR TO BE NUMBER ONE EQUITY trading broker by market volume in 2008, according to official figures released by the Philippines Stock Exchange (PSE).

According to PSE, Deutsche Regis increased its market share in 2008 and secured 11.73 percent of all equity trading volumes with P39.9 billion worth of business.

ATR-Kim Eng Securities came in second, with 8 percent, followed by BDO Securities Group, with 7.6 percent.

Deutsche Regis is a joint venture between Deutsche Bank AG and local management.

Forwarding company goes global

WORLD LOGISTICS INC. HAS MADE ITS INITIAL FORAY INTO THE LUZON-has international express and logistics business with the launch of its flagship brand Wangle.

The move comes as the company expressed confidence in the continued demand for reliable and efficient international forwarders. The company believes this will enable it to weather tough economic conditions in 2009.

"This is a big but natural step forward for our company. We've been growing by leaps and bounds in less than a decade, and the launch of Wangle is a testament to how far we've come as an organization, said company president Paolo Tiling said.

SAFETY RECORD

Ten subsidiaries of Lopez-controlled First Gen Corporation bagged the "Ten Years No Lost Time" Award for their 10 years of safe operations. Both firms earned the recognition from the Department of Labor and Employment's Bureau of Working Standards. Here, Brenda L. Villabroza (left), director of the BWC-DOLE for Region IV, handed the plaque for the award to Richard B. Tantoco (center), First Gen executive vice president and COO. Witnessing the event is Rafael J. Aranzeta, vice president for plant administration.

And the furniture show must go on

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY in Cebu may have been badly hit by the global economic downturn, but the annual Cebu International Furniture and Furnishings Exhibition (CIFF) will still go on as scheduled from March 3 to 8.

The Cebu Furniture Industry Foundation Inc. (CFIF) made this decision amid the upheaval in the Cebu furniture industry. CFIF executive director Ruby Ruben Ardanon said in a statement.

Hurting sector

The industry has been hurting since 2007 due to the global economic slowdown, strong competition with Asian countries, difficulty in sourcing raw materials, high freight costs, strict labor rules, transportation problems and high taxes, Ardanon said.

The US and Japan, the two biggest economies in the world and the Cebu furniture industry's top markets, are now deep in recession, and the development has significantly affected the industry, she added.

From mid-2007 to December 2008, 93 furniture factories in Cebu had to lay off an estimated 11,000 workers—an unprecedented move in the furniture industry, according to a CFIF survey conducted early January.

The CFIF also noted that from July of last year to date, about 26 CFIF member companies closed shop. This number brought the total to 67 closed firms.

Still, the furniture companies have decided to brave the storm.

"The Cebu furniture industry and Cebu X flavor taken up the challenge," she said. "Armed with hope, passion for excellence and trust in the Filipinos' resilient spirit, the industry is fighting to survive."

The CFIF has come up with strategies to enable the industry to cope with the crisis, such as tapping potential growth markets abroad. In the domestic scene, the industry now seeks to strengthen Cebu's core competence in design, innovation and quality, Ardanon said.

Already, the furniture industry has started looking at growth areas in the country, she said.

"With the growth of construction and tourism industry, condominiums are rising fast in several business areas ready to be furnished with furniture and accessories," Ardanon said. "Hotels and resorts sprouting around the country also open opportunities [for our] companies."

To tap this emerging market, she said, Cebu X would involve real estates and hotel and resort organizations to come and see its world-class designs.

Cebu X will bring in not only buyers to the event, but also top interior designers, industrial designers, stylists, facility managers, architects and industry opinion makers to expose them to the latest material designs and innovations that they can recommend to their design-conscious clients, she said.

FURNITURE makers in Cebu remain optimistic despite crisis.

Market position

Also, the CFIF will continue to implement Design and Product Development Programs (DPDP)—a key strategy of Cebu X to keep the furniture export industry's market position as the Design Destination of Asia through product development and design competitions, Ardanon said.

With the governance providing support through the Export Development Council's Export Promotion Fund, the DPDP would ensure Cebu X's sustainability throughout the hard times, she added.

Under DPDP, there is the Design Mentorship program, which will bring to Cebu homegrown designers with international competence to serve as consultants to the Cebu X subdivision.

Among the 13 top designers participating this year are Sal Padilla, Lutas de los Santos-Robinson, Carlos Tenorio, Isa Pascua, Gengy Hosaid, Jozef Cinamo, Bene Ybanez, Cynthia Bautista, Arnel Bautista, Fernando Villarin, Joey Catubena, Lee Ilano and Mauro Cosi.

Talent exhibitors in the upcoming Cebu X 2009 have taken part in the program, working with some of the best designers the country has to offer.

DPDP also has the Student Internship program, which aims to cultivate promising designers of the future and troubleshoots by allowing students of the country's top design schools to work and be mentored by the industry leaders.

Some 40 junior and senior students from the Fine Arts and Design departments of the La Salle College of Saint Benilde, the University of the Philippines Diliman, University of San Carlos and the University of the Philippines in the Visayas have participated in the program.

Indigenous materials

Four new companies have accepted these students as interns, working with their respective design mentors.

Under the Materials Manipulation program of DPDP, research and development on indigenous materials are conducted to discover new applications.

Sixteen companies participating in the program have gone through a series of workshops to come up with material innovations that they will use in design new products for Cebu X and its another international show, "Ambiente" in Frankfurt, Germany, this coming February.

The three creations of students and designers from the different programs will be showcased in the special setting booths of Cebu X.

"This is where you see the best of the best in design and artistry," Ardanon said. "All these are done to raise the level of excellence in Cebu X and to prove that adversity brings out the best in people."

But not all is well with Cebu X 2009, Ardanon said the number of participating exhibitors went down from last year's 93 to 56 this year.

The industry, however, remains optimistic.

"We have not felt any more saturated," Ardanon said. "Though global market demand has slowed down, the programs we have and are implementing will enable us as the same competitors and be ready when demand starts picking up in 12 months."

She added that after this crisis, the industry, though smaller in number, will be stronger and will be in a better position to continue to maintain its position in the world market place.

Pasinaya 2009 kicks off CCP's 40th-anniversary celebration

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan Arts and Books Editor Lisa B. Zaballero

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

ON FEB. 1, THE CULTURAL CENTER OF THE Philippines will become the most creative place on earth when more than 2,000 artists, led by the CCP resident companies, perform at least 70 short previews of upcoming shows included in the 2009 performance season.

Dubbed as the biggest one-day performing arts festival, Pasinaya 2009: CCP Open House Festival is the opening salvo of CCP's 40th-anniversary celebration as well as its contribution to the celebration of National Arts Month in February, or the Philippine International Arts Festival.

Pasinaya 2009 will be held in all the venues of the CCP Active and events will be held in

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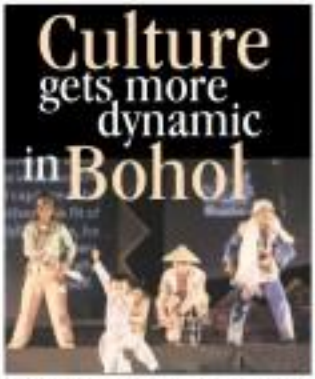

EIGHT YEARS OLD Kaynart Cabestano, from the Punta Cruz Calendrer

By Dante R. Mata
Contributor

THE PUNTA CRUZ Watchtower in Maribojoc, built in 1796 by the Augustinian Recollects, has long been the symbol of possession for the locals in this west-southernmost area of Bohol.

The story goes that the tower was built as part of the local defense system against marauding sea pirates. This was named Castillo de San Vicente, after St. Vincent Ferrer, a very popular Dominican saint. It is a cylinder-based watchtower with a hexagonal second level. The inscription, "Castillo de nuestro Señor San Vicente y nuestro Señor Santa Cruz," is written over the entrance, while the walls feature the Spanish coat-of-arms.

Based on folklore, the statue of St. Vincent Ferrer was originally placed at a designated niche inside the watchtower before being moved to the Maribojoc church. It is believed the statue visits the watchtower every once in a while, as locals would be found, as locals claimed, as St. Vincent's robes. This fits the description of the priests saint as he is best known in hagiography for bilocation, or being in two places at the same time.

A few meters from the tower, toward the south edge, is a three-weathered circular stone, single as well have been a gift from the

CULTURE C2

THE NATIONAL Arts March 1 8-day countdown provides a glimpse of next month's festival.

Get ready for Philippine International Arts Festival, Feb. 1

By Dexter R. Mata
Contributor

THE NATIONAL ARTS Month (NAM), renamed the Philippine International Arts Festival, opens with a bang Feb. 1 in three ways.

According to Shirley Halili Cruz, head of the National Committee on Dance of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, the festival will be launched in colorful activities on "Bicycling Dance," NCCA-TV show on MBS 4, to a mountain scenery show on another TV network, and at Concert at the Park.

But the festival has really been going on since Jan. 15. That day the festival began in celebration of the Clarinda Toys 2 in Intra-

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Get ready for Philippine International Arts F

From page C1

course Manila as part of the 31-day countdown to the National Arts Month 2008.

NAM began 18 years ago when then President Corazon Aquino signed Presidential Proclamation No. 683, designating February each year as NAM.

Beating the start of the countdown, artists sang, danced, played musical instruments, read poetry and painted on the spot.

Performers included Chin Chin Gutierrez, Joey Ayala, Sinyang Bantay, Gathang Luzu, Corrado Somera, Quezon City Ballet, Habli Cruz Dance Company, Ramon Magsaysay High School Chorale, Kamanghan Philippine Dance Company, Sining Kambayan, Dramadamas, and Zimon's Percussions.

The official jingle for the festival, composed by Joey Ayala, was also played.

Present during the event were NCCA chair and Education Undersecretary Vilma Labrador; NCCA executive director Cecile Guidote-Alvarez; and NCCA commissioner Ricardo de Ungria, chair of the NCCA Subcommission on the Arts and overall chair of the 2008 NAM.

Also present were Habli Cruz; Epat Tabuena Hernandez, head of the NCCA Committee on Visual Arts; Gerard Lim, vice head of the Committee on Architecture and Allied Arts; Daddy Co, vice head of the Committee on Cinema; and Eduardo Perez Jr., vice head of the Committee on Dramatic Arts.

With the annual theme "Pat ng Sining" (Harvest of the Arts), the PAFF will be a community celebration with key events involving hundreds of artists from different disciplines, reaching people from all walks of life.

Multidisciplinary event

The activities include "PAfing! LAHAT," a multidisciplinary show that combines a traveling exhibition, lecture forum and film showing. It will examine both film and architecture, the title referring to both the concepts of projected moving image (pelikula) and the chemistry of architecture (pangdikta).

It will take place on Feb. 20, 4 p.m., with a symposium at Pearlmet Gallery and Aida Ito Hall University Theater of University of the Philippines-Diliman, until Feb. 17-21 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Vernacular architecture

The "Bahal Mesonadar Architecture of Mindanao" is an architectural drawing and photography exhibit of the vernacular houses of Mindanao culled from the Wahai Pangangawang project. It is complemented with a lecture series, ritual dances and craft works associated with house building and construction, and a model replica of indigenous structure.

It is slated Feb. 6-11 in General Santos City and Feb. 20-26 in University of San Agustin, Iloilo City.

Sinorhiyon

Sinorhiyon, Sinorhiyon will showcase emerging cinema from the different regions in the Philippines—from the hinterlands to and around Baguio to Negal City in Mind-

NCCA executive director Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, Sen. Edgardo Angara, NCCA chair Vilma Labrador, DEP Undersecretary de Ungria during the press conference to open the 1-Kalap countdown to the National Arts Month

NCCA commissioners and staff with the heads of the various national committees of the Subcommission on the Arts, including Shirley Habli Cruz, head of the National Committee on Dance

NCCA executive director Cecile Guidote Alvarez, NCCA deputy Labrador lead the countdown

Culture gets more dynamic in Bohol

From page C1

sisters. It is said a group of fishermen found a straight piece of wood caught in their nets. They threw it away but when they cast their nets once more, the same piece of wood was caught again.

The fishermen brought it back on land and they noticed the piece of wood was clean of moss, as if it had just been newly debited from a nearby acacia. There was also a cut at about two-thirds length from one end, as if somebody purposely did it as another piece of wood could be fitted to form a cross.

Upon hearing of the find, the captain of the town requested the people to make a cross out of it, which was then planted at the site of the cape.

The cross has since protected the town through its "miracles." One such involved the drowning of three fishermen who would land on the island of Bohol to kidnap women and children and subject them to slavery.

When these pirates made their way to Marilbojoc Bay the sea would invade, creating a huge tsunami that would then devastate the town. The invaders would then run out to flee but not before the water returned and drowned them.

Place with character

These colorful stories give Marilbojoc its character. But these are stories that, Maribojoc Mayor Lemuel Evasco bemoaned, not all the locals know.

"The watchtower is a nice witness to the numerous slave stories and it would be great if the people of Maribojoc know its story," Evasco said. "So that when visitors arrive and ask about the history of Punta Cruz, the locals can provide them with the complete story."

Thus, the Punta Cruz Cultural Collective was created. It is a community theater put together to become a major attraction in the Building Livelihoods and Enterprises in Support of Sustainable Economies Development Through Maribojoc Projects, an eco-logical-cultural tourism initiative by the Punta Cruz Homeowners Organization (PCHO).

GERARDO Calle Jr., as caster Orang Kadya, delivers a dramatic monologue, using Pangalay dance language, about the economic and political motives behind the maritime raiding in the Visayas.

GEMALENE PANCHO plays chanter-narrator, improvising an melodic and rhythmic patterns drawn from indigenous Subanen music.

Composed of cast-of-characters' youth and the PCHO, the Cultural Collective was conceptualized by award-winning film-maker Lamberto Lubod and Elena Labrado, former executive director of the local NGO group Bangun.

Theater members are trained with the help of Lubod's Teatro Bel-aroon. Their task is to mount dramatic and cultural presentations of the colorful mythology and history of Punta Cruz and Bohol during the diaz-trade period.

"They will carry on the task of presenting cultural performances based on the mythology of events in Punta Cruz and Bohol during the slave-trade period, including training, research and organization," Lubod said. "The members have dedicated themselves in saving for each other like a family wherein decisions and responsibilities are collectively discussed and shared. It will not function as a business corporation and revenues will be shared and reinvested for future developmental work."

Fusion

The Cultural Collective's form of expression fuses modern dance and the Pangalay (literally, for "temple of dance"), a pre-Islamic and pre-Christian dance style in the Philippines. It is a living link to dance customs in Asia where sensuality is the key to mastering traditional dances. Its intricate postures and gestures, combined with artistry and sophistication, are kin to other Asian dance forms.

Of all the ethnic dances in the Philippines, Pangalay has the richest movement vocabulary. Although it requires strong technique, it can be danced by anyone at any age, as proven by the youngest, 8-year-old Harmore Celestino, and oldest Asunta Grimal and Teresita Amplefuas.

During the recent soft launching, nobody in the audience would have thought the Cultural Collective members had never had prior experience in the performing arts as they performed "Tawag sa Baroque," a theatrical portrayal of the historical events leading to

DANIEL, chieftain Ijon Nino-ni (a Samal) confronts Moro raiders against a montage of images from 19th-century varieties of marauding sea-vessels, from Naval Museum in Madrid.

MARIBOJOC Mayor Lemuel B. Evasco Jr. (at left) is the community theater collective and its master-production as part of the town's local tourism initiative.

LUTGARDO Labad, Bohol culture leader and award-winning film-maker

the construction of the watchtower as well as other watchtowers in the Visayas.

The monologues were in the local language. To help non-locals understand, across with narration in English was set up in the background.

Costumes by Cebu designer Rudy Ardiente and the stage design by Teatro Bel-aroon artist Francis Barrameda were also outstanding to admire, as well as the effects by Jesuhaniel Dionisio during the latter part of the show when St. Vincent Ferrer emerges from the mountaintops.

Choreography was by Lubod and executed by thirteen Dendo Corbanta, who had just graduated with the Indio Bobol Dance Studio (STEPS) as a scholar of Bea Lubod Jr.

Lubod said he wanted the Cultural Collective to be sustainable and to train interested talents so this would develop a creative and heritage-based cultural program that would boost the town's pride of place, create natural synergy, and cultural identity. The Cultural Collective, he added, should be ready for its grand launching during the National Arts Month or Philippine International Arts Festival in February.

Major sponsors of the initiative include the Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program-Focal Community Assistance Scheme (Pasap-Fosas), Bangun Bohol (Alliance of Non-Governmental Organizations of Maribojoc local government), National Commission for Culture and the Arts, provincial government of Bohol under Gov. Erico Aumentado through the Center for Culture and Arts Development, Punta Bol-aroon and Bohol Council, and Bohol-aroon in the United States.

GSIS exhibit pays tribute to late young artist

ARTIST Raul Dumaual Jr. before one of his murals. He died of cancer in 1992. He was only 33. An awesome right is "Mary, Help the Little Ones."

TO MARK THE 17TH (SIXTH ANNIVERSARY of Raul S. Dumaual Jr., his family is mounting an exhibit in his memory at the GSIS Museum, GSIS head office in Pasay City.

Dubbed as the "artist who painted from his dreams," Dumaual died of cancer in 1992 at the tender age of 33, but left a considerable body of religious-themed artworks which depict contemporary social realities.

His works are marked by a hidden creativity emerging from deep feelings on life's contemplations.

Foremost among his creations is "Mary Help the Little Ones," which now hangs in Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Makati City, brought there by Msgr. Salvador Arellano who used to display it at the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Mandaluyong City.

His other known works are "Banaue Mosaic" and "Christ after Gethsemane," an adaptation of Michelangelo's classic "La Pieta."

The exhibit runs until Jan. 31. Ca

Festival, Feb. 1

Ricardo Jacque and NCCA Commissioner Ricardo

Dramaturg-director Mahen Jacob and NCCA chair

Cebu, Bacolod and Iloilo in the Visayas, and Cagayan de Oro and Davao City in Mindanao.

The festival, a showcase of a new generation of artists telling stories of their own cultures and people to cinematic beats, will run Feb. 18-22 at the CCP.

Sayaw Pinoy

Sayaw Pinoy will be a rousing dance concert that brings together different dance forms. It features dance troupes of the hardcore and inconspicuous performing back to back with professional dance companies.

It will run Feb. 6-9 in the Visayas and NCR; Feb. 13-16 in Mindanao; Feb. 20-23 in Luzon.

Dramafest at Letran-Calamba

Tanghali The 3rd National University Theater Festival will be hosted by Colegio de San Juan de Letran-Calamba and will feature university-based theater groups from Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao and NCR in cooperation with Lusong Luzon Arts and Culture Network.

It will take place Feb. 13-14 on Luzon's spacious pastoral campus in Calamba, Laguna.

Writers' fest

Talaan: Philippine Writers Festival will be a celebration of the word—written, painted, sung or performed—and will assemble writers from all regions and across generations. They will interact with one another and with their audience, tackling issues pertaining to their craft or the situation of writing in the country and reading their own works.

This will be on Feb. 11-13 at UP Diliman, Ateneo de Manila University and Cubao Expo.

Music fest

Digandi Musiki is a series of four concerts showing the metamorphosis of elements of Philippine music from village roots to urban variations, from Cordillera traditions to Kadanyan's world music, from Leyenda ning to Asian Kilat's reggae Hinimaya, from the virtuoso harp-playing of Gemma Cruz-Araneta to the hard-driving neo-ethnic rock of Kapatid Lansdero, from the traditional Balangaw to the acid-jazz remix of Lourd de Veyra and the Radioactive Sago Project.

Joey Ayala weaves the various musical traditions and idioms in a concert which during the concerts on Feb. 7 at JM Rapsin; Feb. 14 at SM Cebu, Feb. 22 at SM Davao; and Feb. 28 at SM North Edsa, Quezon City.

Visual arts fest

Philippine Visual Arts Fest '09 will gather Filipino and foreign artists in interactive sessions and performance art. It will be held at Bellmann's Place in Ermita, Manila, and on Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong, Feb. 16-22.

The 17 regional schools for the arts of the Department of Education will gather for the 2nd Gising Pandayan in Negros City for a conference. Keynote speaker is Malou Jacob, secretary-general of the International Theater Institute.

Also under the Cultural Caregiving Program of the NCCA and the poverty-alleviation program of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the NCCA will sign a memorandum of agreement with the provincial government of Ifugao, headed by Gov. Jun Yumeen, for the establishment of the Artists' Heroing Village in Ifugao.

Also to be launched is the restoration of the Metropolitan Theater Movement, Urbano in Bed in Urdaneta City, Pangasinan, will be unveiled in commemoration of Fray Andres de Urdaneta's 500th birth anniversary.

For more details, contact Rene Napeñas, head of the NCCA Public Affairs and Information Office at (632)8-5065457; or Ideanne Blanquera, NHB deputy festival manager, at 0918-6380913. She may also call (02) 3273329, 3272392 loc. 308, 412-615. E-mail nccapio@gmail.com or public_affairs@nhcp.gov.ph. Visit www.philippineartshot.com or www.ncca.gov.ph.

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PHILIPPINE Madrigal Singers

UST Symphony Orchestra

BALLET Philippines

NAMCYA-UP Concert Chorus

Pasinaya 2009 kicks off . . .

From page B1

dance and outdoors, and will include Hudhud Square and Star Theater for the first time.

The public is invited to see what they can and see all they can in one day. Workshops and demonstrations will be held in different "hubs" all over the CCP.

CCP resident companies will regale audiences with snippets of their performances season to the Resident Company roster. Featured are Ballet Philippines, Bayanihan Philippine National Folk Dance Company, National Music Competitions for Young Artists, Philippine Ballet Theatre, Philippine Madrigal Singers, Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, Ramon Obusan Folkloric Group, Tanghalang Pilipino and the University of Santo Tomas Symphony Orchestra.

TANGHALANG Pilipino's "Ibong Zaturnale"

Other such zones are the Music Zone, Dance Zone, Theater Zone, Film Zone, Literary Zone, Visual Arts Zone, a culinary zone and the Children's Zone.

Pasinaya 2009 will offer sculpture, informative books, exhibits, Chamorizan film screenings, puppet shows, storytelling, performance poetry, a culinary fair and cooking demos, and an arts and collectibles market.

The CCP Pasinaya is a yearly event of the CCP to increase awareness of the CCP performance spaces and programs. This year's Pasinaya is expected to once again draw crowds to the CCP as it offers audiences a day of fun and excellent entertainment through the popular pay-what-you-can, see-all-you-can scheme.

Pasinaya 2009 is the first event in the year-long celebration of the CCP's 40th anniversary.

Contact the CCP Performing Arts Department at 832-1125 loc. 1502-1507.

NAMCYA Obusan Folkloric Group

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LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

Concert pays tribute to neglected Filipino composer

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

ONE CHILLY AFTERNOON OVER light merienda at Bel Caib Seafood Club, composer Angel Peña was surrounded by both jazz and classical musicians enthusiasts who swore by his compositions.

There was the guitar group of Illuminations with her mainly-loving father-in-law. There was jazz pre-maestro Pachin Quiñon (founding president of the Jazz Society of the Philippines), who paved the way for Peña's autistic, opaquely, "A Man and His Music."

A guitarist, Phil Valdez, interpreted Peña's "Sa Iyo Kailan Ito Hihu," while pianist Sheryl Ann de Dios and violinists Miranda played another haunting Peña piece. He thought that, with this exemplary output, this living composer deserved to be on the same pedestal as Nicanor Abelardo and Francisco Santiago.

Peña's new CD "Ugnayan," recorded by the Global StarDet Orchestra under Gerard Salonga, is further proof. My favorite pieces are Peña's "Romanza" with sax player Michael Guerrero, "Peace Beyond" with the same sax player plus violinists Ed Panaligan Jr. Longa and Eleanor Bandoria and the lyrical "Jazz."

Peña is 67 and still looking strong. A concert tribute for him on Feb. 8 at Philamlife Theater will be the first ob-

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Age of Enlightenment Foundation of the Philippines, Inc.

Drawings across four decades

"THE GENERAL"

"MALANG DRAWINGS," FEATURING THE drawings the artist has kept for years, is running until Feb. 8 in the Art Center, SM Megamall.

Juan Gallenzoon writes in "Making Drawings": "Drawing is Malang's way of note-taking, it is his way of talking to himself."

"Seated at a coffee table, he would draw on the napkin. Waiting out an appointment with his dentist, he would draw on a handy prescription pad. Dropping in at my office, he would draw on the blank pages of manuscripts."

Gallenzoon recalls when he and Malang were colleagues at the old Manila Chronicle: "Looking out on the vista of literature from our third-floor office, he would draw the barong-barong neighborhood on the ground (consciously, Spanish Morality) next to elegant municipal council hall. In-tween deadlines, when work was stark, he pranked the Ishmaia bank of Pasig River, drawing the boats and launches beached there."

Malang has kept drawing on a daily basis for four decades, using varied materials, from gouache to watercolor, from acrylic to ink, from charcoal to crayon.

The exhibit and the companion book, which is designed by his grandson, Lani Ibanez, is a testimonial to Malang's unwavering diligence and inspired imagination.

The drawings are not on sale, but the book is. Call 4119221.

"WOMAN"

Concert pays tribute...

From page B1

The eminent jazz and classical composer Angel Pena, 87, is finally getting the recognition he so deserves

Peña concert to take place.

"I did not expect this to happen," Peña, who lives in Hawaii for 35 years, said. "I am grateful to Dang de Elen [a guitarist who teaches at Ateneo] and the many other young people for connecting with my music and promoting them."

Peña is largely self-taught, with a musical exposure that started in Malabon Benevolence Hall where he played the guitar and made musical arrangements on the side. His musical genes came from his mother, Rosario Velarde Abaya, who sang and played the piano.

His first exposure was to classical music, but he later got hooked on jazz, which took him to night clubs in Manila, then in Hong Kong and Japan. While playing in Manila night clubs, he encountered underworld characters who tried to recruit him to become their "musical" member by requesting their theme songs to be played at any time of the night, with guns emerging when he refused to cooperate.

"These harassments made me decide to leave Manila and find a decent life abroad," he said. After of three overbearing night-club gigs, he became a confused celebrity, and he couldn't believe it.

Later, he learned to be a bass player, which served him well when he joined the Honolulu Symphony in Hawaii, where he also worked as an arranger. In between playing the concert circuit and with the symphony orchestra, he flourished as a composer. That explains the frequency of his performances of his Ignacio Bengzon and Divertimento for String and Orchestra.

In this musical tribute, the orchestral works of Angel Peña will be played by the Manila Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Molina, while his Sondrinon will be sung by soprano Camille Lopez and tenor Jesús Molina.

The show is on Feb. 6, 5 p.m., at Philamlife Theater. The big highlight is the world premiere of his composition Pedal Tones for Jazz Quartet and String Quartet, featuring alto saxophonist Michael Ivanovitz.

Call 833-9604 or 5249728.

Artyom in PSO concert

Hailed by the New York Times as "one of the most compelling pianists of her generation," pianist Lydia Artymiw is the featured soloist in the opening concert of the Manila Symphony Orchestra 2009 Concert Season on Jan. 31, 6:30, Schoolman's St. Cecilia's Hall at 7 p.m.

She will play Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467, more popularly known as "Elvira Madigan," with professor Arturo Molina, artistic director and principal conductor of the MSO, conducting.

Titled "Poems of Classicism," MSO's opening concert will include Prokofieff's Symphony No. 1 in D Major, also known as the Classical Symphony owing to its Neo-Classical structure, and Brahms' Symphony No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 68.

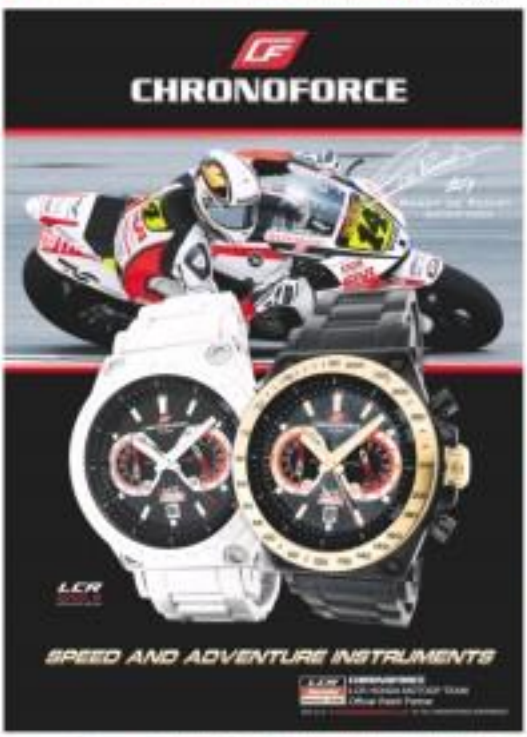
Aside from this performance with the MSO, Artymiw will also conduct master classes for piano teachers and students of University of the Philippines on Feb. 3, 9 a.m.-12 noon, and at University of Sto. Tomas, 2 p.m.-5 p.m.

On Feb. 3, she will give a master class for the piano teachers and students of Sta. Isabel College, St. Paul University-Manila, and St. Scholastica's College. This will be held in the latter's Seminar Room.

The New York Times described Artymiw in 2005 as "a lovely Mozart and an appealing Schumann player," a "satisfying musical soul," and a "pleasure to hear."

The Foundation of Musical Arts, Inc., founded last year promptly to provide financial assistance to the country's gifted musical students, and undertake educational endeavors such as the building of master classes, is naming Artymiw's Manila stint possible.

Call 9926171/2471 or 0915.5792689; St. Scholastica's College of Music at 526-6000 or 5347600, local 208.



GERARD Salonga and Angel Peña

'Atang' rerun in UP

DULAANG UP'S HIT PLAY "ATANG: Ulilang may Misikia," written by Floy Quintos, directed by Alexander Cortes, will be restaged Jan. 28-Feb. 1, at PETROPh 9th Conference Theater, 2/F, Palma Hall, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

The play, a meditation on the life and career of National Artist for Music Atang de la Rama, features Shamaine Centenera-Buencamino, Frances Makil-Ignacio and Ayen Mercado-Laurel, along with Tessy Cordero, Greg de Leon, Bailey Bo, Meynard Pelaluna, Missy Sta. Ana, Jessica Heruela, and Shiela Escalante as Katy de la Cruz.

Joining Cortes and Quintos in the artistic team are Wat de Guzman (musical arranger and original scores); Basil Tinio (dramaturg); Jhester Junio (choreographer); Tonyo Buencamino (scenic designer and costume designer); and Kristel Pineda (costume designer).

Call 0922.8305234 or 0917.6286224; Dulaang UP at 9261349, 9227949, 9818546 local 2446, E-mail [illegible]; http://www.upd.edu.ph/~dup.

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LIFESTYLE Arts/Books

Cory, with no apologies

Set to be released this week, the book 'Cory: An Intimate Portrait' contains fond memories by those close to her, of the woman, president and People Power icon

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS from "Cory: An Intimate Portrait" (Margie Juico, editor; published by Anvil Publishing Inc., 2000). The book will be launched Jan. 27, 6 p.m., at Bestsellers, 6/F Robinson's Galleria, Ortigas Center.

Jose Calida
(Central Bank of the Philippines/ Social Security System)

I have often been asked, "How was it working for that icon of democracy, Cory Aquino?" My reply: "While the jobs I mentioned during the Aquino administration were challenging and demanding, particularly the position of General Bank governor, I had a delightful experience working under a president who loved the Filipino people and who was highly respected, honest, sincere, compassionate, selfless and God-fearing."

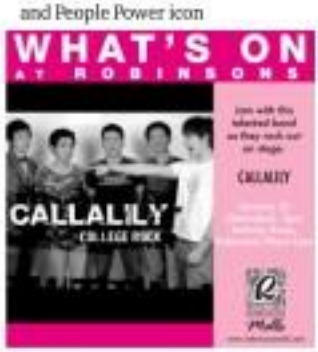
There was never any reason for apprehension when meeting with her, as may be the case with other presidents. She was always very open, pleasant, cheerful even. She even cracked jokes sometimes. But she could be very businesslike and firm, too, when she disagreed. In many of the meetings between the president and the heads of government financial institutions, she would always remind us that, while naturally we should be concerned about the interests of our institutions, it was incumbent upon us to think how our could help the lesser-income groups.

Salvador Mison
(Bureau of Customs)

In managing the bureau, I was free from any political interference; anyone approaching her for concessions involving my office was made to deal with me. And I felt no compunction at all turning down improper requests and was never countermanded. Secretary of Finance Vicente Jayme respected the arrangement.

I was free to hire and fire, subject only to civil service rules. Only the Supreme Court, to my second terror, could set me back, and it did, as I happened, in the most critical way: It practically invalidated Executive Order 127 by ordering me not only to reinstate those I had not reappointed, but to reappoint them to specific positions.

CORY: E2



EXCLUSIVE

John Grisham's newest 'Associate'

By Rod S. De Vera

JOHN GRISHAM'S 22ND book, "The Associate," (Doubleday, New York, 2000, 384 pages) is not shy about its ambitions to 1997's "The Firm," Grisham's second and arguably most popular novel, launching a Tom Cruise-headlined box-office hit.

The protagonist of "The Associate" is a young lawyer in an immensely powerful law firm, a target of blackmail just as the hero of "The Firm" was.

"The Firm's" Mitchell McDeere is a fresh Harvard grad working for the Memphis firm Bendini, Lambert & Locke and is not really worried about the rules. "The Associate's" Kyle Mcavoy, on the other hand, is also a Mackenall victim, but is a Yale grad working for New York-based Sculfy & Pershing.

There are other differences, but for the most part "The Associate" marks a lot like "The Firm." Mcavoy is still in his late twenties of law school when a man making the name Hernan Weglia threatens him with a video of an alleged rape from McAvoy's past to keep the video from surfacing, McAvoy must join Sculfy & Pershing and hand over confidential information, documents about a billion-dollar buyout between huge defense contractors over the B-10 Hypersonic bomber.

Kyle convinced himself that to survive the next seven years, he must learn to think and act like his adversaries," Grisham writes. "There was a new ruthlessness." McAvoy decides to go along with Hernan's plans but also plots an escape. His efforts are fraught with danger as Hernan, and the people he works for, clearly show they mean business. McAvoy is constantly followed, his apartment bugged and, when he characterizes gets in the way of Hernan's plans, that character is murdered. "Everybody has secrets, Kyle," Hernan warns. "I can ruin anyone."

Journey

Even when his phosphorous associates and firm, too, when she disagreed. In many of the meetings between the president and the heads of government financial institutions, she would always remind us that, while naturally we should be concerned about the interests of our institutions, it was incumbent upon us to think how our could help the lesser-income groups.

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CORY: E2

Ahead of the novel's official release tomorrow, INQUIRER sizes up the legal thriller writer's 22nd book

rival in the bookshelves, Grisham has been on a bit of a journey. His initial novels, addictively readable if occasionally improbable legal thrillers ("A Time to Kill") brought best-seller status but grudging reviews. Grisham then controversially tried on other things, including a literary semi-autobiographical novel ("the Painted Bird"), and his successful forays into sports and espionage ("Bleachers" and "The Brethren," respectively).

Yet Grisham also turned those projects with his formal and literary weaknesses intact, though each quite different from "The Firm" and its offshoots.

Grisham seemed to be tinkering with his trademark legal thrillers, trying to imbue them with the flair and lessons of his side projects, attempting to put some literary gloss on the slippery bones of his novels.

He failed, still. "The Associate" suffers from many of the good qualities of 2000's "The Appeal," most human enemy of the book's problems as well. Dialog has experimental phase, Grisham honed up on developing characters to obvious effect. McAvoy is an easy protagonist to like, somewhat insecure, scared of many things, but also unwavering in his problems by unthinking his enemies.

"The Associate" abounds with impressive detail and an abundant description of the parks and profits of life in a big law firm, be it in Memphis or New York. There are gorgeous chapters where Grisham is gleefully and irresistibly delving on the behavior and misbehavior of big-time attorneys, pages magnetic with verisimilitude. He clearly knows his stuff. Similarly, Grisham can propel his novels forward like no other contemporary author.

Propulsive plot

But there is one aspect of a plot to expand. It takes Grisham a professor while to get all his pieces into play and by the time "The

JOHN: E3

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN — BY JOEL KIBBIEN

FUSSO BABOY — BY TIM JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVEHKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHOMICKI

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PAPAZIAN

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBBY — BY LISA GARCELLANO

FULDOK — BY MARK COLL

KIKO MACHINE — BY MARK ARCENA

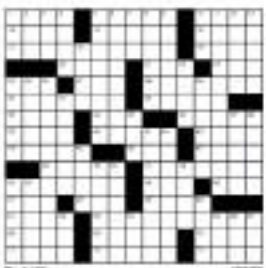
BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Food for Shrek
5 Technologically inadequate
10 Lilac
14 Impressions
15 Run smoothly
16 Actress Hedy Lamarr
17 Beige
18 Dental amount
19 Director Bunuel
20 Persia
21 Prohibition grp.
22 Assassinate, old-style
24 Tolls
26 Ebola
27 Trait to hand a butler
30 Sat. phone
31 Razzle dazzle
38 Young man
39 Lean lost
40 Eden or Ike
41 Fat soup ingredients
43 Supply and selling partners
44 Made garrulous
46 Pull up
47 Texas or Miss.
48 Double shot
51 Tattooed
52 Elite group
55 "Like Mike" singer
56 Perched
57 Old Coup Mere fan one
58 Wrap sign
59 Ravine plateau
60 Ancient Peruvian
61 Ambulatory purchase
62 Sport utility
63 Tiny
64 Favorite
65 Pals as a group

DOWN
1 Mrs. Kennedy's maiden name
2 Ms. Pitt
3 Handshake
4 Bladder
5 Bangkok
6 Watchman
7 Whitney or Wallach
8 Sunset
9 "I'm a short fella"
10 Mental tension
11 Keeps in line
12 "Hop" setting
13 Darling Bob
14 Hypodermic
23 "Dr. ___ and Mr. Hyde"
25 Part
27 North Atlantic fish
28 Thai tot
29 Bell of Hollywood
31 Tyrannical
32 Afternoon nappier
34 Train component
41 Chisel immediately
42 Time preserving
43 Agitators, chiefly
45 Seasons location
47 Husband or wife
48 Ventilate
49 Dr. Seuss's Sneetches
50 Hatchet or bill
52 Artificial limb
53 Hearts
54 Fit of anger
55 Fifty, one
56 City of Capetians and Brandons
57 Pierre's hero
58 Part of CCU
61 Dog's sweetheart

By Jo Vito
Ocean City, FL



Saturday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

FOUNDER'S FRIDAY (Jan. 30): Be extra considerate and kind to others. You're very determined about reaching your goals. Sometimes you are the center of controversy without being ambitious! You're ready to take risks, and sometimes achieve your ultimate goal. Be sure you have a backup plan. Be careful about making promises that you can't keep. Be sure to keep your word. Be sure to keep your promises. Be sure to keep your word. Be sure to keep your promises. Be sure to keep your word. Be sure to keep your promises

Cory, with no apologies

From page E1

After President Aquino's woes, the Bureau of Customs was entrusted under the control and supervision of the secretary of finance, and Imil open again to political interference.

I believe that if President Aquino had been allowed to have her way, the Bureau of Customs would have been reformed.

Alice Reyes
(Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.)

I had been diagnosed with bronze cataracts and Mrs. Aquino (who had finished her novel) sent word about her wish to visit and pray with me and my family and lend me the miraculous blue rosary given her by Sister Lucia of Fatima.

I was especially touched, knowing how busy she was. She could have just sent the rosary. Her faith in the power of prayer for my healing was itself so infectious my family and I promptly felt stronger.

One evening my daughter borrowed the rosary to pray on her own. She asked for some positive sign for me. "Perhaps some white flowers, please, Lord?" The next morning we walked my son-in-law's sister with a bouquet of large, white chrysanthemums...

As soon as my daughter laid eyes on them, she excitedly announced, "Mama, you're well already!"

That week we returned the rosary to President Aquino with a note thanking her and telling her the chrysanthemum story.

I have been cancer-free since.

Dj de Jesus
(Bases Conversion Development Office)

She also appreciated the value of symbols: she was, after all, the ultimate icon of the anti-Marcos resistance and the post-Marcos Philippines. It was important for both Christian and Muslim communities to see her to be convinced of her commitment to the autonomous region. She agreed to be present at events in places like Zamboanga and Cotabato, flying the small jet that served as the presidential plane for her provincial trips...

...Cory Aquino was a person of faith, and this faith enabled her to project a sense of confidence and serenity, even when the objective reality appeared dark and forbidding. Neither in the five years that I served in her government, nor on any occasion after her presidency, have I seen her throw a tantrum or lose control. Perhaps, because after doing one's best, one must not fret. Infact.

Honoring that faith, celebrating that inner calm, despite the possibility of failure, was one lesson I learned, and continue to learn, from Cory Aquino.

Teodoro Locsin Jr.
(Philippine Daily Inquirer/Speechwriter)

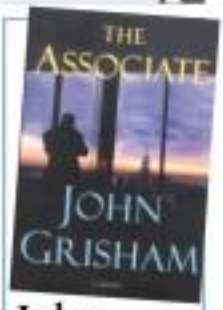
And days there were the words that humbled and haunted me and finally made me throw my hat in the political ring. I had complained that Johnny Arroyo, Reno and I, in spite of our comprehensive talents, were asked our views only on policy, never on politics. "Until you have begged for every vote, and prayed to keep it safe, I really don't want to hear your opinions on local politics."

I don't know yet what to make of those few of many more tonkleers involving my relationship with Common Aquino except to say that you really don't have to choose to be loved, nor to repeat to be understood, nor to inquire in order to influence, nor to throw a fit to show that you are at the very heart of things. There are people in politics who, by just being there and being themselves, shape the world around them in deep and enduring ways. There are many more, of course, who, by trumping on being there, were where they were neither invited nor wanted, and doing the outlandish things as people may remember their presence, still stalks as different as all. Of the former I have met only one...Corazon Aquino.

Aquilino Pimentel
(Senate)

Cory is also endearingly human. When she was hungry, she ate what there was from the nearest eatery, as it happened one day in my native Cagayan de Oro City after bad weather had forced us into an emergency landing. With nothing to serve in my own home, I sent out for halabo, which she praised as her best meal in days.

We can only thank God for allowing someone like Cory for restoring the functioning of democracy in our land and for touching our lives.



John . . .

From page E1

Associate" is ready to take off, the book is literally running out of pages. Then it all suddenly ties together all too well. The book's conclusion is by far the most unobtrusive and frustrating of all of Grisham's novels; one could argue it is not really an ending at all. It's exactly as a friend says in Melrose: "There's your problem. Too much fiction."

Perhaps the oddest part of "The Associate" is something "The Firm" suffered from voluminously. Like Mellroy, Melrose turns into super-lawyer when the occasion calls for it, confronting his shadowy handlers with ease, only Melrose starts doing it while still in law school and proceeds to do so seemingly at will. It's an element that tarnishes the reader's credulity constantly.

As a getting better fast has not come full circle just yet: it actually feels like Grisham is now rewriting his earlier books into more muscular forms. "The Appeal" is essentially an improved mash-up of "Runaway Jury" and "The King of Torts." Dear fans of John Grisham's early potboilers will enjoy this novel because it introduces his first books but spiked with better prose. For good or bad, "The Associate" truly is "The Firm" on steroids in every way.

Available in hardcover from Hammond Book Store.

Young AAP artists at Botong's

"EVOLVE," by Madonna Aquino

THE ART ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (AAP) will open "New Art Collective," an exhibit by 24 emergent artists, tonight at 7 at Botong's Up Bonifacio and Arellano (G/F, s. Venue Mall, across Greet Eastern

"JUXTAPOSITION," by Pius Bulalian

"MASQUE," by Dion Medrano

Hotel, Aboitiz cor Circuit, Makati Ave., Makati City).

In keeping with AAP's thrust of helping young artists, participants are artists who have not had solo exhibitions.

The exhibit, which runs until Feb. 6, is co-organized by The Artists Manila.

Call 750-8344 or text 0917.8065.405.

Penang's heritage and geomancy showcase

Conclusion

THE CHEONG FATT TZE MANSION fell into grave disrepute. It got to the point of being occupied by squatters until a group of concerned Penang citizens who realized that developmental pressures on the land would lead to razing the mansion to an unsafe, it would be left as a ruin. Conservation awareness at the time in Penang was very low.

To save the house, a group of concerned citizens purchased the badly damaged structure with the intention of (unlawfully) restoring it to its original state.

The 12-year conservation process, meticulous, painstaking and perfectionist in a story in itself that culminated in being awarded the Most Excellent Project in the 2000 Unesco Asia-Pacific Heritage Conservation Awards.

Now a heritage hotel, the Blue Mansion (www.cheongfattzemansion.com) offers sixteen luxury residential home units, all with accommodations in 30 uniquely themed bedrooms, all refurbished with heritage facilities, en-suite bathrooms and dressing rooms, air-conditioning, and all conveniences. Staying at the Blue Mansion is to revel in the comfort of heritage while enjoying excellent home-cooked traditional cuisine. It is one of the few unforgettable places that I keep going back to.

The Blue Mansion has become a popular venue for Penang events, weddings, conferences, and as the setting for many films, notably the international Rosa "Indochine" and "Rozsa and the Ring."

Two museums rooms display archival materials related to Cheong Fatt Tze that were either found in the house or collected from outside sources, including his Last Will and Testament, photographs of his wives and children in Penang or in his other houses in Asia.

There is traditional clothing, silk cheongsams and sam-foos that once belonged to his wives and daughters and also on view are his own rare silk shirts that have survived from the turn of the 20th century.

At the Blue Mansion heritage continues with a welcome cachet. No longer is the Blue Mansion an exclusive urban residence for the enjoyment of Cheong Fatt Tze, his family, business associates and friends. As a heritage hotel it is open for guests and the public to experience the lifestyle of the wealthy

INTRICATELY carved wooden screen at the main entrance hall separates the public areas from the private family quarters

SUITES of bedrooms restored into elegant, contemporary guest rooms open out into an open air two-story courtyard.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto F. Villalon

Heritage Conservation Society to hold conference of case studies on preservation of heritage churches this weekend

Penang is a wonderful place, a place that I have always enjoyed going to because the historic core has so much character (now a World Heritage site), the food legends, has the best reason that keeps me going back is the Blue Mansion.

Heritage conference

The Heritage Conservation Society invites everyone to attend "Saving Asian Case Studies in the Architecture and Conservation of Heritage Churches Here and Abroad," Jan 31, 10 a.m. 12 noon, at the Army & Navy Club Building (now Museum) Mainsail in Bukit Bintang (near Quiznos Commissariat).

Speakers and their case studies:

- Thai Parsons, on conservation issues from Siew Teck Chu (Hainanese) Church, built in 1833, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Cathedral of the Immaculate, built in 1876, in Garden City, New York)
- Jennille Dado of the National Museum (San Agustin Church in Intramuros, Manila, is a Unesco World Heritage Site; Parish Church of San Raymundo de Peñafort, Bukit Mertajam, Cagayan, built in 1607 and declared a National Cultural Treasure by the NCCA)
- Angel Lazaro, of Angel Lazaro & Associates (Parish Church of San Andres, in Manilor, Zambales, built in 1607 and declared a National Cultural Treasure by the NCCA)

Lunch will be served. Minimum donation is P200 for nonmembers, P100 for HCS members and P50 for undergraduate students. Call 5212210 or for reservations/ yahoo.com.

SYM Mendoza's great faith; Lindslee's great verve

By Lim B. Zulueta

SOPHOCLO PEDRO MENDOZA, more popularly known by his initials "SYM," recently mounted an exhibit of new paintings, "New Visions II," at the Crucible Gallery in SM Megamall (tel. 6356065). Long based in Canada, he has also remained with the Dissenting Group of artists in a show at the Art Center of SM Megamall.

The latter show featured the stalwarts of the Dissenting Group, including Bernie Galicano: the two senior artists do an interactive painting at the entrance of the show. Galicano with his trademark cloudscape, Mendoza with his geometric figurations and grid colorization.

Noticed after that busy stint in Binondo, Manila where Mendoza used to live (he studied Fine Arts at nearby University of Santo Tomas and University of the East), Dissenting led to many modern impressionists and traditionalists, an attempt that may sound both brash and naive at the same time, then as now. But at least new people showed new approaches the idealism and the adolescence of Dissenting.

Its artists have kept centered and vibrant the tradition of imaginative figuration in Philippine art. And now that Mendoza has resumed to build disciples in Canada (the Art Center exhibit includes Vancouver-based artists), the group has gone international, as it were. Check the group's website at www.dissenting.ca.

Long identified by his trademark cubist impressionism, Mendoza makes no apologies for his works. He has definitely stuck to his "old manner" while not exactly landing to an artistic rut, he has evolved his idiom into something deeper and more mature through the years, showing works that return and revisit standard genre themes; it is in this context that "New Visions" should be taken.

And what one visitors these are! Its luminous intense colors and vigorous but tonally controlled brush works. The figuration threatens to slide over to abstraction, but the overall effect is one of harmony not disruption. To some extent, the cubist grids and planes embody the geometric discipline of Mendoza's art, but they're at least rendered nearly tractable, his is an art that's totally romanticized while remaining resolutely celebratory.

"PEOPLE," by Lindslee. Right: "Still Life Composition with Yellow and Red Flowers," by SYM Mendoza.

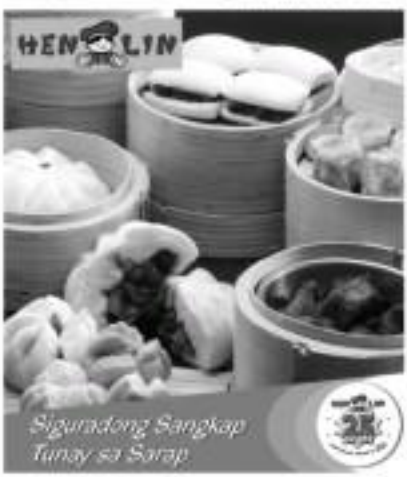
Taxidermy as art

Dynamic young abstractionist Lindslee continues his experimental style figuration through taxidermy with "Chickens Soup," a joint exhibit with Michelle Pauline Lim. The show runs until Jan. 29 in Big and Small Art Gallery, 4/F, Bldg. A, SM Megamall.

The exhibit will feature the latest mixed-media taxidermy sculptures and oil works from both artists. Lindslee's works form the "Chicken" part of the title, which implies the works (including an installation of stuffed chicken, some of which are turned and somewhat feathered); while Lim's works form the "Soup" part, which implies the personal and contemplative sense of the young woman's works.

The show provides a foretaste of the intriguing art of two young artists whose sensibilities—the one predictably figurative, the other predictably formalist—are unified by a shared adventurous spirit. Lindslee's works are robust while Lim's are sensitive. We have here two artists to an artist's sensibility.

"CLASSICAL Wisdom," by Michelle Pauline Lim. Left: "Still Life by the Window" I, by SYM Mendoza.



Vincent de Pio holds first solo at Raphael

"QUIET FURTHERMOST," THE first solo exhibit of Vincent de Pio, opens Jan. 30, 7 p.m., at Galerie Raphael, 2/L, The Plaza, Seventh Mall, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

The show displays the development of the artist's color and stroke, which are especially evident in his series of acrylic paintings of a female musician and her intrigued music.

In 2005, De Pio was among the artists invited to exhibit at Fundacion Conservation held in memory of the late cellist Tilting Lopez. One of the guest performers was Han Song, a visiting Korean cellist.

Drawn to her beauty, De Pio immediately imagined how he would approach his paintings the first time he saw her. Song who did not speak fluent English, became his muse, inspiring several paintings even after years since their first meeting.

The show's title refers to the dynamics of De Pio's works and the variations he introduces in each piece. His play with color and texture is best seen in "White Stitching," where the impasto rendering and saturated tones of the cello sharply contrast with the thin, linear strokes of the pale figure.

In "Angel of Music," he goes the reclusive route and builds a flat background with ochre. The ochre color accents De Pio employs successfully catch the eye. Upon closer inspection, his black and white strokes are not

"CELLIST in Red."

"WINGS of the Wind"

constant with the thin, linear strokes of the pale figure.

With influences from Juan to Luna, De Pio retains impressionism and realism as artistic movements that he infuses into his own, although his own work tends to combine expressionism and realist techniques. His biggest influence remains his father.

Their conversations not only revolve around the technical aspects of art but also deal with the life of an artist and the events shaping the art world today, talks that De Pio says the artist finds valuable in his career.

The show runs until Feb. 15.

Editor Ermie G. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

She's got a friend

NEW YORK—SINGER-SONGWRITER JAMES TAYLOR SAYS LIZ[illegible] gave Californian Natalie Lenhart a friend new tennis player with his songs to replace the one she had to give up when her credit card was declined after a cab trip to the airport last month, according to the New York Post. Lenhart says airport officers told her to hand over her $1,100 iPod now headed with riddles, including Taylor's hits, to the cab driver as payment for the $40 ride from Manhattan.

Laurice: Johnny's condition brings us closer

By Rayne Sun Diego Jr

FILMMAKER-ACTRESS Laurice Guillen was in a hurry to get home after the story conference of the new digital movie, "Kuwra."

"I want to have lunch with Johnny," she explained to director Adolf Alix Jr. That's husband and fellow actor Johnny Delgado, recently diagnosed with lymphoma. "[He] is treatable disease," Guillen pointed out.

Worst part

"He's okay naman," she said. "He's getting the necessary treatment. The worst part was when we [still] didn't know what it was. Now we've become even closer."

Delgado undergoes chemotherapy. "He just had his first chemo and the next session will be in three weeks," Guillen related. "We know what to expect on a daily basis."

She has accepted two projects of late—that lead role in "Kuwra," which is an indie film, and a directorial comeback on a Star Cinema project.

Guillen deftly straddles the indie and mainstream worlds, as she does work in front of the camera and behind it.

The last time she appeared on the big screen was in 2005's "Moon at Sixteen"; the last time she directed a film was in 2004's "Santa Santita."

"Kuwra' is my first indie film as an actress," said the Cinemalaya festival director.

"Cinemalaya has exposed me to a lot of fresh stories and filmmakers," Guillen said. "I've been following the work of Adolf, who's a graduate of Cinemalaya. When he told me about this project while we were chatting on Facebook, I didn't think twice about acting again."

Top consideration

Details concerning the Star Cinema project are still being finalized, she said. "As of now, it's a suspense drama with a love triangle twist." Initial reports point to Gabby Concepcion, Angelica Panganiban and Dawn Zulueta as possible leads.

"Before accepting any project these days, my most important consideration is the work schedule because I want to be with Johnny as often as I can," she said.

E-mail: bgsunsundiego@hotmail.com

LAURICE Guillen plays the lead role in the indie movie "Kuwra."

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GALLERIA

1 UNDERWORLD 3
2 YES MAN
3 THE ABANDONED
4 BRIDE WARS
5 LOVE ME AGAIN
6 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
7 HILOT
8 [illegible]
9 [illegible]
10 [illegible]

ERMITA

1 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
2 YES MAN
3 UNDERWORLD 3
4 BEDTIME STORIES
5 LOVE ME AGAIN
6 BRIDE WARS
7 THE ABANDONED
8 HILOT
9 [illegible]

METRO EAST

1 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
2 UNDERWORLD 3
3 LOVE ME AGAIN
4 [illegible]
5 BRIDE WARS
6 YES MAN
7 BEDTIME STORIES
8 THE ABANDONED

NOVALICHES

1 HILOT
2 UNDERWORLD 3
3 YES MAN
4 LOVE ME AGAIN

PIONEER

1 THE ABANDONED
2 UNDERWORLD 3
3 LOVE ME AGAIN
4 YES MAN

STA. ROSA

1 UNDERWORLD 3
2 PASSENGERS
3 GRAVEDIGGERS
4 LOVE ME AGAIN

LIPA

1 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
2 SEX DRIVE
3 MONSTER SLAYER
4 LOVE ME AGAIN

DASMARIÑAS

1 TRANSPORTER 3
2 UNDERWORLD 3
3 LOVE ME AGAIN
4 YES MAN

IMUS

1 BEDTIME STORIES
2 UNDERWORLD 3
3 LOVE ME AGAIN
4 YES MAN

ANGELES

1 UNDERWORLD 3
2 LOVE ME AGAIN
3 PRIDE AND GLORY
4 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON

STARMILLS

1 DESPERADAS 2
2 LOVE ME AGAIN
3 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON
4 BEDTIME STORIES
5 UNDERWORLD 3
6 PERFUME

BACOLOD

1 PRIDE AND GLORY
2 LOVE ME AGAIN
3 BEDTIME STORIES
4 DUMPLINGS
5 ANG TANGING WA KYONG LAHAT
6 HILOT

ILOILO

1 TRANSPORTER 3
2 FOUR CHRISTMASES
3 LOVE ME AGAIN
4 PASSENGERS
5 BEDTIME STORIES
6 HILOT

RP show wins 2 awards in NY fest

TWO episodes of "Power to Unite," aired Sundays at 6 p.m. on ABS-CBN, won two awards, a gold and a silver, in the 2008 New York Festivals.

The 30-minute show, directed by Louie Ignacio, is hosted by Shiela Ng-Go, whose music video of the same title bagged a gold medal last year in the same competition.

The World Gold Medal for Cultural Issues was conferred on the show's episode titled "Finding the Rhythm Within through Music and Arts" and the Silver Medal for Religious Programs on the

episode titled "Time To Be With You In Case Be With You In Love."

The program is also a contestant Asian TV awardee, cited for being child-sensitive and family-friendly.

'Starter Wife'

"The Starter Wife" series, which premieres on 2nd. Avenue tonight at 9, picks up where the miniseries left off.

CLICK!

Focusing on the post-divorce adventures of Molly Ringle (Debra Messing) as a single mother raising her daughter Jaden, it introduces funny sequences in the form of Molly's dreams about soccer events in her life.

MTRCB ▸ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will need the guidance of accompanying parents or adults

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MALL SHOWS
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January 25 - SM City Bicutan

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SM City North EDSA
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directed by JOSE JAVIER REYES

OPENS JANUARY 28

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OPENS JAN. 28

INKHEART

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

At the Cinemas

GLORIETTA 1	1 CLOSED	2 CLOSED	3 CLOSED	4 CLOSED
GLORIETTA 4	1 LOVE ME AGAIN	2 UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS	3 [illegible]	
	4 THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES	5 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON	6 YES MAN	7 BRIDE WARS
GREENBELT 1	1 YES MAN	2 UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS		
GREENBELT 3	1 YES MAN	2 UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS		
	3 THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES	4 UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS	5 BRIDE WARS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 YES MAN	2 YES MAN		
	3 LOVE ME AGAIN	4 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON	5 BRIDE WARS	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS	2 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON	3 THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON	4 LOVE ME AGAIN
MARKET! MARKET!	1 UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS	2 BRIDE WARS		
	3 HAUNTING OF MOLLY HARTLEY	4 YES MAN	5 LOVE ME AGAIN	
TRINOMA	1 LOVE ME AGAIN	2 LOVE ME AGAIN	3 BEDTIME STORIES	4 BRIDE WARS
	5 YES MAN	6 UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS	7? UNDERWORLD: RISE OF THE LYCANS	

At the Malls

Glorietta	Photowalk! Asia Jan 26 (10 a.m.), Glorietta Activity Center
Greenbelt	ART PARK featuring Artist's Lab February 2 – June 30, 2008, Ground Park
Alabang Town Center	Real Living Home Exhibit January 18 – February 10, Home Zone
Ayala Center Cebu	Bank Cebu Booth Jan 12 – 21, Rotunda 1
Market! Market!	Nescafe Classic Free Fire January 24, Activity Center
Trinoma	Nescafe Free Fire Jan. 31, Activity Center

Christ Light — Repertory Philippines presents A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS FILIPINO
January 18 to February 9, 2008
For details, call (632) 911-0731 or log on to www.repertoryphilippines.com

Ayala Museum — UNDERGLAZE WORKS CONCEALED & REVEALED
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TIMEZONE

www.timezone.com.ph

Glorietta Greenbelt Alabang Town Center Ayala Center Cebu Trinoma

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

Princess says Rustom will always be her friend

PRINCESS PUNZALAN FIELD is one of Ramon Padilla's closest friends. They met up when he was in the US before he decided to "transform" into Bebe Gandingahan.

Cass' e-mail reads: "Nat, were together on my birthday and Christmas Eve. We talked about spirituality and what's happening in our lives. I didn't get to meet Bebe, though. He told me about his plans. I will be his friend whatever happens. Just wanted to say!"

Princess Cunda loves Ms Gandarophan: Stupid and loyal!

To move or not

Miriam Quiambao is still undecided whether to move to ABS-CBN or not.

"I'm a freelancer right now," she says. "I'm open to offers. The most important consideration is if the job is something I believe in. I would like it to be instrumental whether in hosting or acting. I want to host a lifestyle/talk show and do roles with depth and complexity of character. I'm also willing to do comedy or show my versatility."

Reports have it that she's being eyed to be Willie Revillame's new co-host in "Wowowee." Isn't she wary of Willie's "colorful" history with women? "I'll deal with it if and when I get the job," she replies.

With Miriam's charms and talent, she's overqualified for any dream job. See us I always tell my girlfriends like her: Don't work too hard. Just play harder to get!

Five in one

Christian Bautista is all ego for "Pop Icons" (Feb. 21 at the Big Dome). It's the very first time that Christian, Pinky Pascual, Jose Mari Chan, Willy Mark Bautista and Erik Santos will be together in one concert.

"Don't worry that it could rankle the crazy imagination of some quarters and fuel (our) "gay" rumors! "We don't let such issues affect us because it's simply not true. We are all secure in who we are."

MMK Cunningham

Vhik Santos, Sam Milby, Mark Bautista, Christian Bautista and Pinic Pascual perform in the concert "Pop Icons" Feb. 21 at the Big Dome.

Put no rules to their friendship. Instead let the pop icons relax your night with their awesome music.

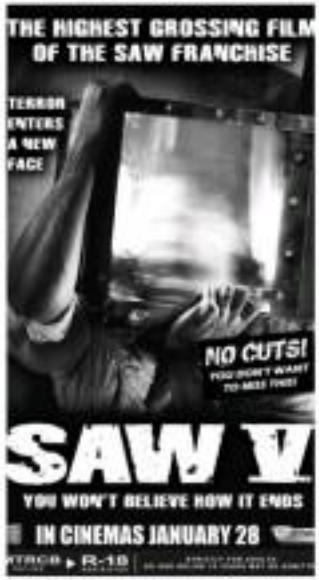
Tattooed ankles

Raymart Santiago and Claudine Barretto had the same of their baby Sarraino tattooed on their ankles. When the proud parents play with Santino, they would go "Cookie Cookie Cookie Santos."

Natalie Cole live

I can hardly wait for "An Unforgettable Evening with Natalie Cole—Live in Manila" on March 13, 8 p.m. at the Big Dome (Call 2149999 or 9120555).

E-mail: wearing@abalang@yahoo.com



LEARNING
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INQUIRER IN EDUCATION | bench/

The Magic Circle

Chapter 1

Story by Gilda Cordero Fernando
Illustrations by Gilbert Docoy

Unaware somehow
Kinalocad ang sikhulang
Filipino belief

ALTERNATELY AND together, it seemed and it seemed, the sky turned red and violet and gray and chanuph to all the sun shone fiercely. Then it drizzled. He was sure the wedding was on.

He was. From the dilapidated bamboo house which was the very last in the barrio, in the small town which, from a whole succession and valley, had dwindled to a few hectares. He walked slowly, carefully, so quietly as he could, on the crunchy confetti of leaves and between the long vines, dead all the way he was whispering "Bahaya, cuidado," hoping not to disturb the invisible small creatures.

He had on his best long shorts, Jepoy forgot, this pawnee boy in the village; on his head, his dead father's cap. It took more than an hour to get to his destination which was the oldest banyan tree in all creation. Beautiful and every which way crooked. The tree stood. Everyone had heard about the mysterious lights that went on inside when the ancestor was believed to be having a party. About the dance music that wafted outside, the smells of cooking and the clinking of plates and glasses. But few had actually seen the tree, so dangerous was it to find.

Misera, who had tried to penetrate the forest, had been left sunny by a twelve-foot tall, opal-smoking Aspro and emerged every A bigger was deposited by a half horse, half human blistering on top of the tallest bare palm. A hunter, who accidentally shot an enchanted deer, became a permanent resident. Gifts of explosive were attacked by animals, said to be the familiars of witches.

But Jepoy had been there once before and he was not afraid. As a matter of fact, he had been invited! He has fitted himself comfortably in a hollow between the humped roots and waited.

Jepoy's mother washed other people's clothes. All day she hunkered the Ore generous from the big houses and was always tired. One teaching, two weeks ago, Jepoy's dog, Gallo, had snatched a multi-colored silk shirt from the washline and run away with it. The shirt was ruined by a snooty señora and his mother was frantic.

Jepoy had chased the skin bobbing in front of him, faster and faster, never dreaming that Gallo would venture into the forest. He did not catch up with the dog until they were right in front of the magic tree. And there Gallo disappeared into it.

Jepoy was left wondering how the dog seemed to have melted right into the trunk. Slowly he went around the tree. That was when he noticed several stacks of white plates gleaming among the high roots.

He had heard of them too, of course—Dalia Geronima's fabled trick that was true! Legend had it that the ancestors borrowed Dalia Geronima's plates whenever they had a party. And according to the story, the story folk always returned them, washed and clean and on the same spot the next day.

Jepoy marveled at the beautiful plates—dozens of them! They were gold, stained and had lace edges. Behind him Jepoy suddenly heard a sniff, voice and felt a cold hand in his pocket. He could feel himself turned about with a golden heart who had materialized behind him. "Make yourself useful! The ancestor pointed a crooked finger imperiously at the dishes. "Carry those!"

Jepoy Barbajan was too stunned to do anything but obey. "Follow me!" the dwarf said, grunting as he lifted a stack of plates himself. The boy carried the bigger pile. Each time they got to the tree, a door that seemed to be made of light opened magically for the dwarf.

All the time, the old dwarf was grumbling. "They forget the utensils are handed here every odd. They never give me an utensil." He turned to the boy. "By the way, I'm Ongki, of Spanish descent," he said, sticking his back.

Inside, the tree was damp and dark and empty. The dwarf led Jepoy to an even darker kitchen where he was told to deposit the dishes. "Watch them!" the dwarf commanded. Jepoy did. It was a difficult task, scrubbing with only leaves and no soap. From the corner of his eye, Jepoy caught sight of his dog, Gallo, drinking in one corner. His food was his go of the colorful shirt. "You give me that!" shouted Jepoy.

The dog went down on his haunch. "I promise to take it back tomorrow," Gallo whined. "I just need to wear it to the party tonight. I was invited. It's classy. And afterwards to wash the dishes." And Gallo again disappeared into the dark corner.

As soon as the plates were clean, the dwarf showed Jepoy hurriedly out the door. Instead of giving him a gold coin that would take care of their two needs for five years, the stingy dwarf patted the boy's head. He told Jepoy to come back in a fortnight. Two blinking were getting married and Jepoy was invited (to wash the dishes).

"What day?" asked the dazed boy. "You'll know," Pepe winked. "When it rains and shines together."

That how can I enter the tree all by myself?" asked the boy.

"Grow your eyes," said the dwarf. "There is an invisible third eye in the middle of your forehead. Try to use it. Focus. Drive all thoughts away and only BELIEVE. The rest will open."

This is the first chapter in this fictional serial story that INQUIRER *is running for the enjoyment and education of readers of all ages at home and in schools. Look for a new chapter in this section each Monday for the next three Mondays to follow along with the story.*

Next Monday: The Wedding

See art content on Page 16

Student Activity Guide

Just checking

1. Jepoy Barbajan was wearing his best long shorts and he was crossing. Why?
2. What role did the dog Gallo play in this chapter? What does her name mean?
3. What could possibly be the reasons for Pepe's being so cranky?

Vocabulary

Alcazar (see translations, spelled *engkanto*)—a colonial Filipino term for most supernatural beings. "The Spanish word *encantado* or 'bad' then, are fairies who reside primarily in the forests and the sea. They can also be called *encantados* (male) or *encantadas* (female).

Familiar—a "familiar" in the pet animal of an encanto. Gallo, for example, are the usual familiars of witches. Pigs and black dogs are the most common familiars of the Philippine *aswang*.

Dalia Geronima—a character in Philippine mythology also even by National Artist for Literature Nick Joaquin in his stories.

Third Eye—Gnosis believe we have an invisible third eye on the forehead. If it is open, we can see the fourth dimension.

Diwata—kind creature of lesser mythology believed to help people with their work or with money (usually gold coins).

Something to think about

1. Look at the artist's drawings of the boy, the tree and the dwarf. Write a letter to the artist and tell him what you think about his drawings. Then draw your own interpretations of the boy, the tree and the dwarf.
2. In the first paragraph of the second column, reference is made to *aswang*. Learn more about Philippine lore that is endangered on p. 4K. Form a group and plan a campaign to save and propagate the species.
3. Re-tell the story in a chronological sequence using the Fortunately/Unfortunately pattern.

Fortunately: _____
Unfortunately: _____
Fortunately: _____
Unfortunately: _____
Fortunately: _____
Unfortunately: _____
Fortunately: _____
Unfortunately: _____

Using the Inquirer

What do you think about people who say they can tell fortunes? Do you think anyone can predict the future? Read your horoscopes for today. What does it say about the kind of day you are going to have? Copy the prediction and write a paragraph about whether or not you believe it and why. Then write a prediction for Jepoy as he going to get inside the tree again for the wedding? What's going to happen at the wedding?

Values connection

Imagine you are Jepoy. What do you think he is feeling as he is running after the dog that snatched the silk shirt from his mother's *tampuyan*? Have you ever had to do something like that for your mother? Explain the situation.

Legarda to teach at Lyceum College of Law

LAWYER KATRINA LEGARDA HAS joined the faculty of the Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU) College of Law. Vhell teamed her heart to give or history with honors from the University of Bristol, United Kingdom, and her law degree from the University of the Philippines. She was admitted to the Philippine Bar in 1991.

LEGARDA

Legarda has taught and lectured to various prestigious academic institutions both here and abroad, including the UP, United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and the International Bar Association of the Philippines. She is a former partner of the Angara Abello Concepcion Regala & Cruz Law Office.

Letran scholarship program

THE LETRAN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (LAA) has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the College de San Juan de Letran (CSJL) for an alumni scholarship program for deserving youth. Signing the MOA for LAA was president Rodolfo M. Concepcion and, for the school, Fr. Generoso Lava, O.P., CSJL rector. The MOA will give alumni scholars a 50 percent tuition fee discount. Strict screening and monitoring of scholars will ensure they adhere to the goals of the program.

Search for college scholars launched

THE UNITED WORLD COLLEGES (UWC)-PHILIPPINES IS searching for top-caliber graduating high school students interested in studying abroad for a two-year baccalaureate course. Applicants must be Filipino and must be in the top 10 percent of their class. They should also graduate from high school before August.

Deadline for submission of application forms is on March 6, 5 p.m. Candidates will be eligible for full or partial scholarships at UWCs in Wales, United Kingdom; Italy; Hong Kong, or Costa Rica. Visit uwcmsph.uwc.org or contact Gillian Nicola at info@phuwc.org or fax 8330294 for more information and to request for application forms. Co-chaired by Herbert Mandelbi and Jocelyn Quiros Nava, UWCs is a global educational movement that brings together students aged 16–19 from all over the world at pre-university level. Selected based on merit and regardless of race, sex, or creed, students live together in an environment designed to foster international understanding, peace, and justice. The two-year International Baccalaureate program serves as the educational framework. Concurrent service programs allow students to work together. UWC-Philippines is chaired by Cesar Nicola.

HEADS of Iranian's higher education institutions from Japan, Iran, Pakistan, Korea, Bangladesh, India and the Philippines, with representatives from Unesco and the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia.

Network of Asian Women's Universities and Colleges (Nawuc) formed

HEADS OF DIFFERENT WOMEN'S higher education institutions in Asia have formed the Network of Asian Women's Universities and Colleges (Nawuc). The organization was created during the recent Regional Networking Conference of Presidents of Women's Colleges and Universities at Silliman College. It was attended by representatives from Iran, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Korea, India, Japan and the Philippines, as well as those from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia and the Scholars' Women's Leadership Center, Korea. Nawuc hopes to advance the educational, citizenship, and leadership aspirations of young Asian women. Fe Verzosa D. Limcaoco, Miriam College president and convener of the meeting, said women's colleges and universities had "to create an enabling environment in society so that this education we give women will be genuinely empowering and transforming."

First Asia's Career Quest 2009

THE FIRST ASIA INSTITUTE Alumni Organization (FAIAO), together with First Asia Institute's (FAI) Office of Career and Placement Services (OCPS), will hold Career Quest 2009, a jobs and career advising fair, on Feb. 26 at the school campus in Sawasan City, Bataan, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Being organized in partnership with Jobs08, a leading provider of online recruitment services in the Asia Pacific, Companies and institutions interested to participate in this job fair as sponsors or exhibitors may contact Melani Suarez at 047-802-2026, 0917-6254969 or e-mail to melani@firstasia.edu.ph. MU has more than 5,000 students at present. It has 16 courses in technology, humanities, and management. Its Community College offers two-year certificate courses.

NORA Daza (in dark dress) is now a University of Batangas lecturer.

Consultant for UB's culinary arts program

THE UNIVERSITY OF BATANGAS has invited well-known Filipino cuisine-centering expert Nora Daza to be a consultant for its new culinary arts program under the College of Tourism & Hospitality Management (CTHM). Daza will conduct special lectures and seminars for both faculty and students and share her expertise in local and international cuisine. UB president Dr. Ma. Isabel G. Perez accorded Daza a special welcome by organizing one of his exclusive galleries in her name to the Royal Horticultural Society in London. Daza said, being a Batangueña, it was an honor to serve the students of an institution that did the Batangueño proud.

TIP Manila student to attend youth congress

APOLLO E. JIMENA, THIRD year accountancy student of the Technological Institute of the Philippines-Manila, will participate in the 13th National Youth Leaders Congress (NYLC 2009) to be held Feb. 19-12 Organized by the Ayala Group of Companies, this year's congress will have for its theme "Leading and Serving Conscientious Action." A consistent TIP scholar, Jimena is vice-president of the Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants (JPIA) and Humanities and Social Sciences League of Students (HSSLS). She is also probationary chair of the non-profit Young Marketers Organization.

JIMENA

Educators' Week

THE ECSAE SPED CIRCLE, A professional organization in De La Salle-Lipa (Batangas), will celebrate Educators' Week Jan. 26-31. Themed at the event is "Excellence: De La Salle-Lipa Future Educators' Congress on Jan. 30. For inquiries, e-mail lenbellatrix@yahoo.com.ph.

UE honor graduate tops licensure exam

UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST College of Dentistry graduate Cecille Mae Uy Desmonte topped the December Dentist Licensure Examination with an 93.95 percent rating. Desmonte graduated magna cum laude with the degree of Doctor of Dental Medicine (DDM). Two other UE graduates were also in the top 10: Ameriejo Raguindin Montan, 11th, 91.2 percent, and Anna Maria Manuel Sandee, 9th, 93.74 percent. UE was ranked no. 1 among top performing schools with 25/26 examinees in the last exam. Out of 54 UE examinees, 51 passed for a 91 percent passing rate. The UE administration will give a testimonial dinner for the successful examinees and the College of Dentistry faculty on Jan. 28, 6:30 p.m., at the Kalinaw Room, Century Park Hotel. For information on the dentistry program, call dean Wendy S. Ong, 7250834 or 7250471 to 82 loc. 327, 328 or visit www.ue.edu.ph.

DESMOND

TOYOTEAM'S Gingerio and Dolores Lim, LIM's Torres and Yap

Mindanao school is car firm's partner

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINDANAO has become the fifth T-TEP partner school in the country and the first in Mindanao. This was announced during the T-TEP (Toyota Technical Education Program) Partners' yearend meeting at the Guest Lounge of Toyota Motor Philippines Corp., in Sta. Rosa City, Laguna. The event was organized by the customer service operations of Toyota Motor Philippines Corp., in cooperation with Toyota Motor Philippines Foundation, Inc. (TMPF). Also present were officials of the service operations Makinon Corporation and Toyota Training Equipment by Shimizu and Bridgestone Inc. The University of Mindanao through Ma. Judalina B. Torres, vice president for institutional affairs, and Ma. Nestia B. Yap, technical school director.

JRU hosts ASAIHL echo-conference

JOSE RIZAL UNIVERSITY WAS THE venue for the Echo Conference of the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL) International Conference on Borderless Education. More than 60 delegates consisting of college and university presidents, vice-presidents, deans and department heads from various colleges and universities in the National Capital and nearby regions attended. The conference discussed papers from the Philippines, including the University of the Philippines Open University, and others presented in the International Conference held recently in Bukittinggi, Thailand. Dr. Vincent K. Patalib, JRU president, is ASAIHL Philippine Council vice president for 2008-2010.

Ateneo alumni artists present new 'Adarna'

THE ATENEO CHILDREN'S THEater (ACT) is staging "Adarna at ang Ibong Kahel," its 77th production, as part of the celebration of Ateneo de Manila's 150th year or Sesquicentennial, on Jan. 30 at the Ateneo Theater, Ateneo Loyola Heights campus. The new version of Adarna focuses on the last part (fourth and fifth) of the komiks.

Most of the members of the team behind this new production are also executives playwright Kristian Cruz, set designer Glen Gonzales and freelance designer Adam Eigo; classmates from grade school to college. Choreographer Jim Perez is a graduate of the grade school and a member of ACT. Grade school toastmaster and play producer Fr. Norberto Ma. L. Sandoval, S.J., and assistant headmaster and executive producer Jonny Salvador have renamed the department's auditorium Mariano Singson Jr. Hall, after the director who first staged Adarna at the grade school.

Playgrounds for the Mind

EUREKA! *Queenie N. Lee-Chua*

Why East Asians do well in math

(first of 2 parts)

SINGAPORE, JAPAN, SOUTH Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong usually top international surveys of mathematics and science ability in the world.

Countries we should expect to do so well, such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, were listed in the Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS), while the Philippines languishes near the bottom, with countries like Morocco and Colombia.

Language

Many reasons are given for the excellent performance of East Asian students. One is language. When faced with multiplication tables as a child, I tried different ways to make memorizing easier (hint it, all of us really love to memorize them). My southern sister-in-law in...they used songs, games, flash cards to make the process less painful.

But what stuck in her mind was the sound of my mother and my cousins doing multiplication in Waikkienese. English numbers in words, like seven, take one-third of a second to pronounce, while their Chinese equivalents (like qi) take less than one-quarter of a second.

The difference may not seem much, but when the words are incorporated in phrases, it becomes significant. For example, the English phrase "2 times17 [is] 34" consists of seven syllables. Seven-like in seven syllables, depending on how you say it. The Mandarin equivalent, er qi shuai, is just four syllables, taking less than two seconds to say.

English is not exactly conducive to math. For example, fourteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen and nineteen make sense, but why not sixteen, twenty, threeteen, fourteen? I think of fourteen as four-ten, sixteen as six-ten, and so on.)

To add to the confusion, since 14 is four-ten, why is 23 twenty-one, and not one-twenty? In 14, ones are placed first, while ten place last, which is the reverse for 23.

For those of us who are used to this system, the difference may seem petty, but can be kids struggling in the primary grades (and whose math lives are ruined over after).

How those of us who use language inside these numbers? Down to ten one, 12 is two-ten, 23 is two-ten-three, 67 is six-ten-seven, no problem.

"That difference means that Asian children learn to count much faster than American children," says business and science writer Malcolm Gladwell in his provocative new book "Outliers: The Story of Success." "From year-old Chinese children can count, on average, to forty. American children at that age can count only to fifteen, and most don't reach forty until they're five. By the age of five, in other words, American children are already a year behind their Asian counterparts in the most fundamental of math skills."

The basic operations are also more convenient in Chinese. Gladwell gives this example: 37 + 22. An English-speaking child has to first convert the numbers in his head and then do the math. The Chinese child just adds three-ten-seven and two-ten-two, and the answer is right there in the phrase: five-ten-nine.

Gladwell talks about function, the basis of most kids. One half is not easy to grasp in English, neither is two-thirds. But in Chinese, they are simply "one of two parts, take one" and two-thirds is "out of three parts, take two." This makes fractions seemingly simpler to understand.

Problems with math

Problems with math start around the third or fourth grade. Gladwell believes that for children in America, "math doesn't seem to make sense, its linguistic structure is chaotic, its basic rules seem arbitrary and complicated."

Asian children, he continues, don't feel that same indifference," he continues. "Maybe that makes them a little more likely to enjoy math, and maybe because they enjoy math a little more, they try a little harder and take more math classes and are more willing to do their homework, and on and on, in a kind of virtuous circle."

Hard work

Perhaps the best explanation for Chinese skills in math is just plain practice and hard work.

Luckily, Chinese schools, such as Chiang Kai Shek College, that teach math twice a day, once in Chinese, once in English, already have a built in advantage. Students are rarely exposed, and have twice as many assignments and twice the time to master math skills. No wonder they excel in local and international competitions.

If Filipino schools will have the math periods cut by only, then perhaps they can match up.

Why do East Asians work so hard? The common answer is Confucian culture that expects children to do their best out of respect to their families and society. Also, in ancient China, the only way for a peasant to improve his lot was to pass the civil service examination, and this entailed a lot of study (and sacrifices on the part of the parents).

The success stories of Korean and Vietnamese immigrants in the West revolve around parents watching over their children while they do homework, monitored on the kitchen table.

The same situation holds in the Philippines. In many Chinese-Filipino families, parents take full responsibility for their children's education. Yes, they can be overbearing at times, and overprotective, but the results are evident.

In school seminars, I ask the children how many go to tutorial classes after school. Less than a third do so in many Chinese schools, since their parents are their main tutors. But in most Filipino schools, more than half have to. It's hard on the kids, losing daily since their parents are at work or, as some children say, "I don't want Mommy to spoil me because we always fight."

Do Chinese parents have to work? Most of them do, but they still find the time and the patience to coach their kids.

Gladwell puts forth a fascinating theory: East Asians work at school because their rice-farming forebears had to work hard to eke out a living. What does rice have to do with math? Find out next week.

"Outliers: The Story of Success" (Hachette Gladwell, 2008) is available in Bookfiles, 3rd floor, Robinsons Galleria, tel. 636.0663 ext. 402, e-mail ph-bookfiles@hachettebookgroup.com ph.

E-mail Queenie N. Lee-Chua at bkcebook@yahoo.com.

FOOTNOTES

Parangasan students' fund-raiser for hospital

THE MEDICAL Missions Outreaching Service to Fellowship (MMSF) is holding the charity event "Frequency-Pulse Quantum Resonation Sound Treatment" Jan. 30, 7pm, at Mabuhay Rice Bar and Restaurant, Roxas Blvd. cor. Buendia Extension. Proceeds from the event will be used to buy electrocardiograph machines for the Dagupang Maynila Medical Center.

MMSF is an organization of students of the Parmasseun ng Lung and ng Maynila College of Medicine and Hospital Administration.

Mathematics seminar slated Feb. 27

THE MATHEMATICS Teachers Association of the Philippines-Tertiary Level (MTAP-TL) Chapter with the Mathematics Area, School of Multidisciplinary Studies, De La Salle College of Saint Benilde, will hold a seminar-workshop on Feb. 27, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the OLS-CSB, Taft Ave., Manila. Workshop theme is "Calculus Centered Perspectives in Mathematics." Speakers are Dr. Marcius J. Acebedo and Dr. Ronald E. Mercon. Call Aeng B. Bonoguin at 524-1922/526-5000, 09144829 or e-mail mtapgaudi@ols-csb.edu.ph...or Antonio A. Chanmay, at 09189134506 or e-mail aachanmay@ateneo.edu.ph.

Conference on world class education

CONFUCIUS International will hold a conference on Creating a World Class Education Feb. 6-7. Speakers are Singaporeans Dr. Yeap Ban Har and Dr. Subramaniam and Ramasothies of the National Institute of Education and Ling Yuan and Poo Zhiwei Peng of the Ministry of Education. Topics are "Why Kids Like Singapore Math," "Why Kids Like Singapore Science," "Introduction to Secondary Science Using the Singapore Approach," "Future Trends," and the "Benefits of English Taught as a Third Type and Young Learners So." The conference is open to all private school educators. It will include presentations at conducts free seminars and workshops for schools visiting Singapore's My Pals Are Here! English, mathematics and science textbooks. Call 8870883 and 8311042 or e-mail rsvp@confucius.com.ph or visit www.edcorhotelseminars.blogspot.com.

Workshop on 'Sharing the Dream' project

THE ISUZU Concord Group (ICG), a leading conglomerate in the Asian Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) region, hosted recently a two-day workshop-workshop to promote its "Sharing the Dream corporate social responsibility (CSR) project.

The workshop was conducted with the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP). ICG's project gives financial aid to several poor high school students from partner schools in Metro Manila, Bulacan and Batangas so they can finish high school. ICG Paper president Edmund Chuatoco said the program promoted family love and loyalty, "cornerstones of good citizenship."

Cebu school gets audio-visual room

THE BANCO de Oro (BDO) Unibank Inc., through the BDO Foundation, donated P1.5 million for an audio-visual room at the Sacred Heart School of the Society of Jesus (SHS-SJ), Cebu City.

The donation was received by 30-80 SJ-Cebu president Fr. Ernesto Javier, SJ, and school treasurer Fr. Julian Herranz, SJ. BDO Foundation was represented by BDO Cebu Ayala Business Park branch manager Philip Yu. Trust and Investments Group senior manager and lending head Jennifer Sia, Central Visayas region head Rudy Lim, and Cebu Area 1 head Dindo Yap.

BDO hopes the donation will help the school get the additional funds students and faculty need.

Do you have war stories?

CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!

In an effort to recover and record stories about the personal experiences of veterans of the Second World War, as well as others who lived through the period, the Philippine Veterans Bank and the Philippine Daily Inquirer have launched the 2009 World War II True Stories Contest.

The 2009 WWII True Stories Contest enters prizes for the three best original narrative stories. The first place winner will receive a laptop computer and a printer plus a P1K savings account or P1,000. The second place winner will receive a desktop computer plus a P5K savings account or P5,000. The third place will receive a digital camera plus a P7K savings account or P7,000. The alternative prizes will be awarded.

The Philippine Veterans Bank and the Philippine Daily Inquirer are pleased to announce the 2009 WWII True Stories Contest.

Official Entry Form

PHILVETBANK | veteransbank

Name:

Address:

Mobile: Telephone:

School:

Grade: Teacher's Name:

Contest mechanics

1. The contest is open to all Filipino citizens 13 to 18 years of age attending public or private high schools in the Philippines.

2. To compete, a high school student must:

a. Personally interview a WWII veteran or any person alive during WWII about his/her experiences during the war (see below Guidelines).

b. Write a narrative in English that tells in a maximum of 2,000 words the interviewee's story, including important details and quotes from the interview (see Manuscript Guidelines).

3. Each narrative entry should be an original, unpublished, logical, coherent and factually developed narrative written by the student. A student may only submit one entry.

4. Each manuscript should be typed or computer-printed on plain, white, letter-size paper. Pages must be numbered consecutively and double-spaced. Use only one side and with no more than 12 characters per inch or no less than 10 point type.

5. Each entry should be accompanied by a fully accomplished entry form cut out from the inquirer's Learning section (photocopies not acceptable) and glued on a sheet of paper that serves as cover page.

6. Each entry must consist of the following:

a. the narrative manuscript with the fully accomplished entry form;

b. interview tapes,

c. transcription manuscript,

d. signed releases by both interviewee and the student,

e. an endorsement from the student's history or English teacher, and

f. a certification from the school principal that the entrant is a full-fledged high school student at the school. Only one student can win per school.

g. Each entry may be accompanied by photographs, maps and/or illustrations, but no memorabilia may be taken from the interviewee or his/her family. If there are diaries, journals, letters, etc., this should be indicated in the manuscript and on tape. If the entry wins, PVB will ask for the interviewee and look at memorabilia for validation.

7. To ensure impartial judging, there should be no name or other identifying information on any page other than the cover page. All pages of the narrative story must be stapled together in the upper left-hand corner with the cover page first.

8. Entries may be submitted to any Philippine Veterans Bank branch nationwide. Clearly mark the envelope "2009 WWII TRUE STORIES CONTEST" and include the following information: Student's name, address and telephone number(s), school's name, and the PVB branch where it is submitted. A full list of PVB branches nationwide can be seen at www.veteransbank.com.ph.

9. Entries may also be submitted to Philippine Veterans Bank Corporation Communications & Marketing Services Dept., 101 V. A. Rufino corner Dela Rosa Sts., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

10. Entries must be received by 4 p.m. of March 16, 2009. Entries received after this date will not be included in the judging. Neither PVB nor PDI may be held accountable for entries sent by mail or courier service not received by March 16, 2009.

11. Receipt of entries may be verified at telephone (02) 882 6700 loc 711 or by e-mail to corporatecommunications@pvb.com.ph.

12. All entries will be examined by the Philippine Federations of the Philippines - Sons & Daughters Association Inc. (WWF-SDAI) District Offices as to the authenticity of the name and military service or guerilla unit of the subject veteran.

13. The panel of judges, whose decision shall be final, will consist of representatives from PVB, WWF-SDAI, PDI, National Historical Institute and University of the Philippines History Department.

14. Selection of winners will be based on the following criteria: Substance content, originality, authenticity, and compliance with guidelines (60%); and Form: clarity, proper use of language and presentation (40%).

15. The first place winner will receive a laptop computer and a printer plus a P1K savings account or P1,000. The second place winner will receive a desktop computer or also a PVB savings account of P1,000. The third place will receive a digital camera plus a PVB savings account of P5,000. No alternative prizes will be awarded.

16. The endorsing teachers of the winning students will be awarded P5,000 in PVB savings account each.

17. The judges may decide not to award all of the above prizes.

18. Winners will be announced on April 1, 2009 and will be notified by mail, e-mail or telephone. After proper verification of the identities of the winners, prizes shall be awarded on April 8, 2009.

19. The winning stories will be published in the Learning section on April 13, 20 and 27, 2009 in commemoration of Bataan Day.

20. Non-cash prizes are non-convertible to cash. The 20 percent tax of prizes over P10,000 will be shouldered by PVB.

21. Prizes shall be personally delivered to the winner's address or school address as specified in the Entry Form.

22. Winners of the PVB savings account shall open a PVB savings passbook or ATM account with the nearest PVB branch.

23. All entries, including the narrative manuscripts, interview tapes, transcriptions, etc. become the property of Philippine Veterans Bank.

24. All employees of Philippine Veterans Bank and Philippine Daily Inquirer, their advertising agencies and their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are not allowed to participate in this contest.

25. For more information about the contest, call (02) 9024103 to 11 or e-mail corporatecommunications@pvb.com.ph. For interview and writing guidelines, log on to www.veteransbank.com.ph, or www.inquirer.com.ph.

What I've Learned

The real meaning of leadership

IT SEEMS THAT MY LIFE'S LESSONS, OF LATE, have been geared toward the real meaning of leadership. Perhaps I view it this way because of my worst as president of the University of the City of Manila (Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila or PLM) and as spokesperson for the United Opposition. Or maybe it is because of my being a father and husband to my young family. Or is it due to the lack of transformational leaders in our country's political scene?

Suffice it to say leadership has been in the forefront of my thinking.

I have culled three main lessons on what is leadership.

Leadership is empathy

One of the things I enjoy doing as university president—and for which I am sometimes bemoaned because some view it as unbecoming—is inspecting, on a regular basis, the entire university: checking all the classrooms, restrooms, facilities and grounds of PLM. Of course, part of the inspection includes interviewing students, professors and staff. By doing this I get to see the real condition of the university—what needs to be fixed, who are the people who are actually working and who are lazy, what the students and staff need, etc.

This is the practical side or the foundation of empathy. Seeing how the people that you serve are stressed and learning about their needs and aspirations give you the capacity to empathize and enable you to make adequate decisions on policy matters and resource allocation. If I had not done my regular inspections, the transformation of PLM from a university without even Internet access for its students to the new PLM with modern facilities—such as, among others, free Internet access, a first class student cafeteria, air-conditioned classrooms, etc.—would never have happened.

I believe one of the reasons we have a failure of leadership in the Philippines is our inability to see how the majority of Filipinos live. These pseudo-leaders are so divorced from reality and lack real empathy that regardless of their educational background, intellectual or even good intentions, they can never govern wisely. How can you lead when you don't even know the people you are leading?

Leadership is vision

This is the great paradox: In order to lead you must empathize with those you lead; but you must have a better vision than the majority. Leadership must be visionary—meaning that a leader must see possibilities beyond what others see. Otherwise, any group, organization or even a nation will be muddled in mediocrity and the status quo. The leader must not only be able to see a better future but must also be able to articulate it to the stakeholders and motivate people toward achieving the goal.

How many of our pseudo-leaders can we honestly say have a real vision for our country? Or is it such a tyranny that our country is not starving for food?

Leadership is anticorruption

I am amazed at having received numerous compliments on the improvements I have done in PLM. A big part of what we have been able to accomplish is better facilities and benefits to our employees and staff—bonuses, a free fitness center, muscle stretcher, etc.—to simply show we have an anticorruption policy.

By doing something as simple as complying with the law on procurement, going through the proper bidding process, and making sure that resources are allocated in a sustained and transparent manner, there is more than enough money to address all the needs of the university. In other words, I myself have accomplished more not in spite of, but because of, anticorruption.

alma matter

Where Adv. Brawner was educated:
Elementary—**JESUS, OF**
High school—**La Salle Greenhills**
University—**Ateneo de Manila University** (AB Economics, Law)
Graduate—**University of the Philippines** (Master of Public Administration); **Harvard Law School** (Master of Laws)

This has been a powerful lesson for me because I have seen, firsthand, on a microlevel, how corruption can destroy an institution, such as a university, which is exactly what has happened on a macrolevel in our country. The Philippines, similarly, will forever be unable to provide the infrastructure, healthcare, education, and international reforms to move our country forward if our leaders are corrupt.

As a final note, all these lessons have been grounded on my discipline for my family which is, honestly, a selfish motivation.

As a young dad, I shudder at the thought of what kind of future my sons, Isaiah, 6, and Miko, 3, will have if our country does not produce transformational leaders—leaders with empathy, vision and integrity to fight corruption.

INQUIRER IN EDUCATION

bench/

Festive Fantasy Contest

For art's sake

INQUIRER IN EDUCATION, in cooperation with Lyra Art Products, launches a weekly art contest corresponding to the four chapters of "The Magic Circle."

Guided mechanics are as follows:

1. The contest is open to all high school students from private and public schools alike.

2. The theme of the contest is to create a colorful animation fantasy scene corresponding to the chapter published.

3. Medium to be used shall be acrylic on gel crayons on 10" x 12" illustration board.

4. On a blank sheet of paper, indicate the student artist's name, school, address, year level, landline and mobile phone. Along with a photocopy of the student's school ID, glue the sheet on the back of the illustration board.

5. Deadlines for submissions:

Fantasy scene for Chapter 1 - Jan. 31

Fantasy scene for Chapter 2: Feb. 7

Fantasy scene for Chapter 3: Feb. 14

Fantasy scene for Chapter 4: Feb. 21

6. Artwork by a particular chapter will be disqualified if received past the deadline.

7. Submit or mail entries to: Mart showroom at 427 C.T. Yuchengco Street (formerly Nueva), cor. Salinas-Pacific St., Binondo, Manila (tel. 5482373).

8. The artworks will be judged according to image impact.

9. One winner will be chosen for every chapter every week.

10. A photo of the weekly winning artwork will be published in the Learning section.

11. Winners will be awarded a certificate and P5,000 worth of art and educational supplies.

12. Prizes may be claimed at the Mart showroom, the same place where entries are submitted.

PRIZE for winning artwork of the week from Mart

Oh deer

NATIVE TO THE PHILIPPINE isles, tiny herds of Calamian deer survive in the forests of the Islands of Busuanga and Culion in Northern Palawan.

Sometimes considered a subspecies of the hog deer, the Calamian deer differ by having smaller and shorter heads, longer legs, subtle markings on the throat and chin, extra distinctive high-pitched nasal bark that can be mistaken for a dog's. The bark deer or sings have three-pronged antlers. As they age, their coats darken in color.

The Calamian deer graze in open fields and forage in lightly wooded areas. They form small and fast moving herds. When threatened, they leave their herds and slowly move to the nearest cover. They breed year-round and produce one or two fawns. Life span is 12-20 years. They are crepuscular or active just before dawn and dusk.

Unlike other deer species, the Calamian deer are usually noisy when moving about, a fearlessness bred by the lack of large predators in their home range.

In 1984, conservationists established Philippine wildlife sanctuaries in northern Busuanga by the Calauit Island Game Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary. The captive breeding program proved extremely successful, bringing the total population of 25 heads to more than 1,000. The species has now been brought to adjacent areas.

The Environmental Education campaign of WWF-Philippines aims to educate and motivate the Filipino youth to participate actively in the overall process of conserving and protecting the Philippine environment. WWF-Philippines, also known as Kalikasan ng Pilipinas (KNP), is part of the WWF global network operating in over 100 countries. Its goal is to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

Courtesy of WWF-Philippines

LECTURE ON TOURISM

Mayor Lito Atienza of Manila and tourism students of the University of Makati attended a seminar on positive values and attitudes in the hospitality industry. Speaker Dr. Robert Lim Joseph (front), standing, chair of Tourism Educators and Movers (Team) Philippines, emphasized the importance of values and attitudes for success. Sponsored by the Skal Club of Makati, Philippine Airlines subsidiary, Trans Philippines, and Tune Our Skies Movement, the seminar was the first in a series aimed at enhancing the knowledge of students and making them more competitive. Skal Makati has forged an agreement with Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, Skal chair emeritus, for the holding of the lectures and on-the-job training.

An international school for Koreans

ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL-caliber school has been set in the 10-hectare McKinley Hill township of property giant Megaworld Corporation. Soon to join Bonifacio Colleges and the Chinese International School Manila is the Korean International School.

The international school, which will be run by the Korean School Foundation Philippines, Inc., through its chair Sung Sang Chee and executive director Keun Hyuk Chung, was completed during the last quarter of 2008. It starts its first school year this March.

It will initially have a four-story building rising on a 3,000-square-meter lot with a capacity of 450 students, although Keun said they were looking at putting up another building in a few years to accommodate up to 1,000 kids.

The Korean School Philippines, Inc. is not the first Korean-owned school in the country. There are at least two others that have been operating for years, catering to the children of Korean expatriates working in the country.

Keun said the average tuition per year would be about $5,000. The school will be accepting non-Korean students and will give partial scholarships to descendants of Filipino veterans of the Korean War.

While the Korean language and culture embedded in the curriculum, Keun said the school would help ensure Korean children will acquire Korean education while staying in the Philippines.

He added that other nationalities who would graduate from the international school would have no problem pursuing professional careers in Korea. Visit www.koreanis.org.ph.

THE KOREAN International School Philippines is set to open in March in McKinley Hill township, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. Executive director Keun Hyuk Chung said the location of the school, which was near Embassy Colleges and the Chinese International School, was perfect because it was beside a botanical garden, ensuring an environment and atmosphere really conducive to learning.